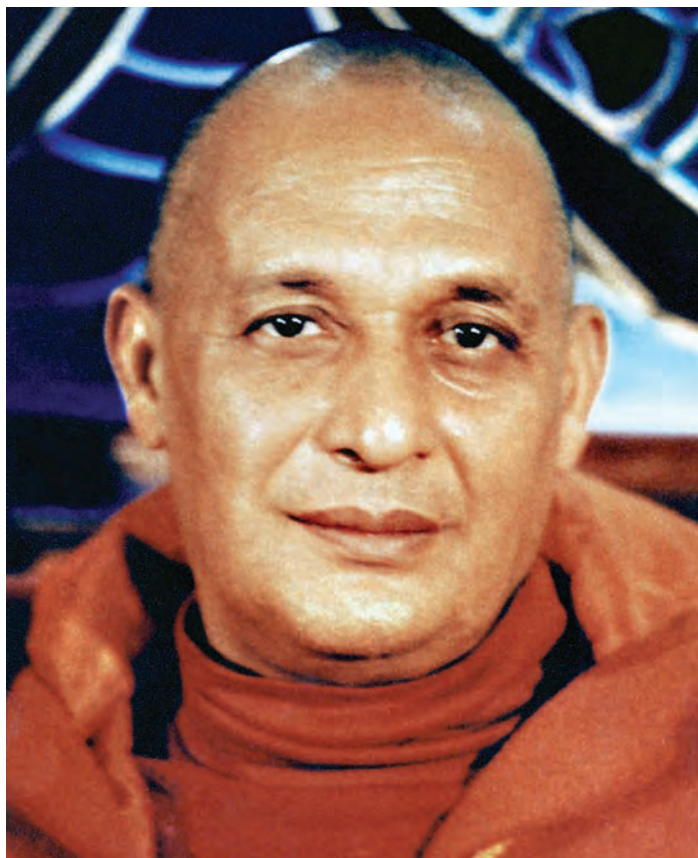


Volume II

Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

Teachings of
Swami Satyananda
Saraswati
Volume II



1963–2013
GOLDEN JUBILEE

WORLD YOGA CONVENTION 2013
GANGA DARSHAN, MUNGER, BIHAR, INDIA
23rd–27th October 2013

Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Volume II

*The short talks contained in this book were delivered by
Swami Satyananda Saraswati during 1979–81 at various
yoga conventions and seminars held in Europe, Scandinavia,
South America and Australia and during Kriya Yoga and
Teacher Training Courses at Bihar School of Yoga, Munger.*



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

© Bihar School of Yoga 1982, 2012

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, transmitted or stored in a retrieval system, in any form or by any means, without permission in writing from Yoga Publications Trust.

The terms Satyananda Yoga® and Bihar Yoga® are registered trademarks owned by International Yoga Fellowship Movement (IYFM). The use of the same in this book is with permission and should not in any way be taken as affecting the validity of the marks.

Published by Bihar School of Yoga
First edition 1982
Reprinted 1984

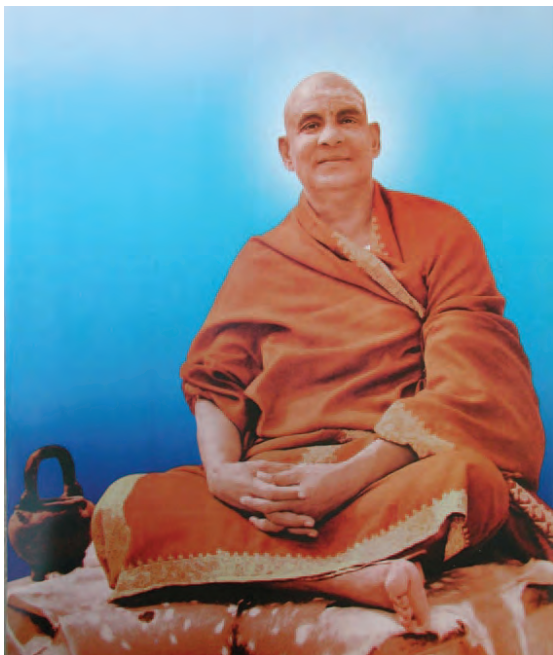
Published by Yoga Publications Trust
Second edition 2012

ISBN: 978-81-85787-03-9

Publisher and distributor: Yoga Publications Trust, Ganga Darshan,
Munger, Bihar, India.

Website: www.biharyoga.net
www.rikhiaepeeth.net

Printed at Thomson Press (India) Limited, New Delhi, 110001



Dedication

*In humility we offer this dedication to
Swami Sivananda Saraswati, who initiated
Swami Satyananda Saraswati into the secrets of yoga.*

Contents

1. Yoga as it is Today	1
2. Choosing a Yoga Teacher	4
3. Discovery of Tantra and Yoga	7
4. The Value of a Mantra	10
5. Combating Karma	13
6. The Place of Karma Yoga in Ashram Life	17
7. Why Have an Ashram	22
8. Training the Mind through Yoga Nidra	25
9. The Birth of Yoga Nidra	28
10. Yoga Nidra and Negativity	32
11. The Role of the Emotions and Intellect	35
12. Satsang and Psychotherapy	38
13. Alleviating Tension	41
14. Siddhasana and the Heart	46
15. The Truth about Tantra	50
16. Tantra for the West	54
17. Establishing the Guru-Disciple Relationship	56
18. Every Guru is a Light	59
19. Moving in the Spirit of the Guru	61
20. Instructions to the Disciple	65
21. Learning through Transmission	69
22. Plants and Trees	73

23. The Technological Culture	75
24. Poverty in India	79
25. Tapasya	82
26. Ashram Culture	85
27. Structuring an Ashram	89
28. Don't Seek Security in an Ashram	93
29. Combating Disease in the Ashram	96
30. Modern Medicine	99
31. The Hindu Concept of Creation	102
32. Sexual Concepts	105
33. The Purpose of Sexual Life	108
34. The Meaning of Sakshi	111
35. Dhyana Yoga	114
36. Is Meditation Dangerous?	117
37. What is Good and What is Bad?	121
38. The History of Tantra	124
39. Is Life on Earth About to End?	126
40. Who Dies and What is Death?	129
41. What are Mudras?	131
42. Harmonizing Ida and Pingala Nadis	134
43. Trataka	138
44. Vasanas and Samskaras	141
45. Breaking the Bond	144
46. Evolutionary Role of Karma	147
47. Our Silent Supporters	151
48. Message for the Swamis	154
49. Free Your Mind	156
50. Three Types of Disciples	159
50. God and Guru	161
51. Guru is One	164
52. Guilt	167
53. Psychoanalysis	169
54. The Nature of the Mind	171

55. What is Kundalini	175
56. Why Awaken Kundalini?	178
57. Yoga for Children	182
58. Relationship between Hatha Yoga and Tantra	186
59. Tantra and Vedanta	190
60. Bhakti Yoga	194
61. The Power of Bhakti	197
62. What is Love?	201
63. Maintaining Harmony in the Family	204
64. Thinking Badly about Others	208
65. The Secret of Kirtan	212
66. Awakening Faith	216
67. God is One!	219
68. The Three States of Mind	223
69. How to Overcome Desires	226
70. Suppression	229
71. Marriage or Sannyasa?	231
72. What Should I Eat?	233
73. The Hindu View of Vegetarianism	236
74. The Correct Diet for Sadhakas	238
75. Brahmacharya	241
76. Tale of Power	245
77. Managing Kundalini Awakening	247
78. Kundalini and Drugs	251
79. Kundalini Awakening and Samadhi	254
80. Beyond this Earth Plane	257

Interviews with Swami Satyananda

Press Interview	261
Radio Interview – Part 1	269
Radio Interview – Part 2	277
Interview with New Age Magazine	283

1

Yoga as it is Today

As part of his valedictory speech in Torino, Italy, in April 1981, Swami Satyananda gave a brief report on how yoga is being integrated into the lives of more and more people throughout the world. As such, the social, moral, spiritual and even political values are changing wherever yoga is being recognized as a national science.

It is becoming more and more apparent that yoga will become the culture of every nation in the world. Thinking people are now evaluating the role yoga will play in the formation of a new social order. Those who are spiritual by nature have, of course, already realized the place of yoga in their lives, but now people from every field are discovering that yoga should be introduced into every stratum of society to enable everyone to restructure their mind and personality.

In many countries, yogic practices are being taught in the prisons, and now great and positive changes are taking place in the personalities of hardened criminals. Every country has its own specific problems to solve and we have to find how we can relate yoga to those problems. For example, drug addiction is a great problem in America, and the recommendations of symposiums and the introduction of new laws to curtail drug abuse have all failed. However, in the various drug rehabilitation centres where yogic techniques are being taught, very good results are being obtained.

In the field of mental health a lot of work has already been done with yoga, particularly with hatha yoga, and of course the results are excellent. In several countries, children are being introduced to yoga and all the reports I have seen are very good. The belief that yoga is only a means of physical exercise is obsolete. Scientists in many countries are now researching the effects of yoga practices on all forms of disease. In Australia, doctors are even utilizing yoga and meditation in the treatment of cancer patients.

All this proves that the yoga postures, pranayama, mudras and bandhas do not only work on the physical level, they also regulate the pranic force and the flow of the individual's consciousness. I believe that the medical profession will soon realize that all forms of disease resonate from the depths of consciousness. As such, they will soon recognize the fundamental importance of meditation in the science of yoga.

You may be surprised to know that many of the European governments are beginning to recognize the efficacy of yoga. The Danish government acknowledges yoga as part of its national education program, and in Czechoslovakia, the Department of Sports and Health is adamantly promoting the cause of yoga amongst its citizens. In France, the government has recently donated land and given a grant of a few million francs to the French Federation of Yoga to develop a Yoga University. These are just a few examples of how awareness of yoga is spreading throughout Europe.

In my own country, yoga has become a compulsory subject in many of the government schools and as a result, thousands of teachers from every state must receive yogic training. I am presently preparing a big complex where these teachers can be trained and by next year we should be able to commence yoga teacher training on a large scale.

However, the most important task is to expose more and more people to the benign influence of yoga. All over the world people are suffering, whether they are financially secure or living in poverty. Just because one is well dressed, resides in a nice home and has a good position does not mean he is

free from internal agonies. Everyone is striving for peace of mind and happiness, but this will only come when you expose yourself to yoga and begin to know a little more about the man within.

So we should all select a few practical techniques that we can practise every day, and we should create a balance between meditation and physical postures. Don't expect to perfect the asanas in a few months, as it will take years. In the same way, the effects of meditation can only be felt after a long time. And you must remember that only if you are regular in your practices will you be able to reap the benefits.



2

Choosing a Yoga Teacher

Swami Satyananda outlines the most important characteristics of a genuine yoga teacher and emphasizes the necessity of finding a teacher who not only has academic knowledge but spiritual qualities as well. Recorded in a satsang at Satyananda Ashram, Mangrove Mountain, Australia, on 8 November 1980.

Yoga is not just a science to be learned like biology, botany or chemistry. Yoga is a science which should be learned not only for the sake of knowledge, but in order to cast its positive influence on our mind, body and emotions. Therefore, it is important that we find a qualified teacher from whom we can learn yoga. One of the most important qualifications of a yoga teacher is that he has a steady mind and a balanced personality. If he is restless, unstable and caught within the storms of life and emotional upheavals, then at the most he can only be a tutor.

All over the world there are hundreds of thousands of yoga teachers, professors, lecturers, tutors and masters of yoga. Apart from transmitting knowledge, these teachers should also give forth their personal vibrations, magnetism and spiritual qualities. Otherwise, when you attend their classes you may learn many things which you can discuss afterwards, but when you think about it you feel that in your spiritual life, or in the realm of your inner personality, you have really gained nothing.

What can a teacher of yoga give you? An experience and knowledge. Knowledge is confined to man's intellectual domain. Experience is what enables us to imbibe what we have learned on a practical level. What is experience in yoga? Facing the situations of life with peace, courage and understanding. Life is not a flat plain or a simple path; it is a series of experiences of ups and downs which occur on the economic, emotional and spiritual planes.

The real teaching of yoga, or the inspiration that the yoga teacher can give you, is not related to instruction. He gives it to you through an emanation of his personality, which is something completely independent of intellectual and academic accomplishments.

One teacher may have studied Latin or Sanskrit, the Bible, Vedas and Koran, but that is only academic knowledge. Another may have learned nothing at all: no Latin, Greek or Sanskrit, neither the scriptures nor the holy books, but still he might have attained equilibrium and understanding and realized the totality of his personality. That he can give you, and this is what we call spiritual emanations.

When you go to a yoga teacher you should not be intent on seeing his certificates. True, sometimes certificates are necessary for opening an institution, but for a disciple or student they are not important. Don't look for certificates or the quantum of knowledge a teacher possesses, but see if there is complete agreement between the two lobes of his brain. In most people, the right and left sides of the brain are always in conflict. What the right side thinks, the left side is discharging. What the left side accepts, the right side is always criticizing. That is the source of conflict in man's behaviour. In order to become a teacher of yoga there should be harmony between these two giants within the head.

In India, they always ask: "Who is a guru?" The ultimate answer is: "One who has experienced peace within himself." When you know that the teacher is well disciplined and is united in silence within himself, and that he can give you

an experience of peace, then you will know that he has stabilized his consciousness.

There is a book which Hindus like very much called the *Bhagavad Gita*. Read the second chapter of that book from verses 57 to 73 and the question will be answered properly. Arjuna was the commander-in-chief of an army and Krishna was his charioteer. Krishna was a very important personality in our history, who played many significant roles, including that of a yoga teacher. In the 56th verse, Arjuna puts the question: “What is the definition of a man who has a steady consciousness, who has united the mundane with the divine consciousness? When a person has stabilized his consciousness, how does he speak and think?”

Krishna’s reply continues up to verse 73. In one verse he says: “The teacher or the guru should be able to express himself and to withdraw himself like a tortoise. Even as a turtle is able to expand the limbs of his body whenever necessary and withdraw them all within that cup-shaped shell whenever he is in danger, in the same way, you should be able to involve yourself in the life of the senses (that is, the day-to-day life), and immediately withdraw yourself when you find it is getting dangerous.”

You know that the interaction between the senses and the sense objects is going to lead you to accidents, but still you are not able to withdraw. The teacher or the guru should have complete command over the behaviour of his mind and senses. There are many beautiful verses in this section of the *Gita* and everyone should study them. They should be a guideline for all who wish to understand what the yoga teacher must be. Gurus have a right to screen disciples, and the disciples should also have some standard by which they can screen the guru.

3

Discovery of Tantra and Yoga

Here Swami Satyananda gives a brief outline of the major events that occurred in his early spiritual life. He also explains how he came to realize that tantra and yoga could alleviate the physical, mental and emotional sufferings of mankind. Recorded at a satsang given in Antwerp, Belgium in May 1977.

Consciously or unconsciously, I believe I was treading the path of spiritual life even while I was in my mother's womb. At the age of six I had a peculiar experience and I could not feel my body. When I reported this to my parents, they could not understand it and they started consulting doctors. It was only by God's grace that doctors were very scarce in that primitive part of the country. So no doctor tried his skill on me. I was taken to faith healers, but they were not able to do anything with me.

Loss of all bodily feelings was an experience which came to me on and off. My father was the disciple of an eminent swami who was very famous in India at that time. When he visited our village, I was taken to him. He told my father that I did not have any disease, but I was having a type of spiritual experience known as disembodiment. This brought my father to a deeper awareness of spiritual life and he wanted to admit me to an ashram. However, other family members did not agree, but he used to inspire me to become a swami and develop my spirituality.

After some time, my father realized it was time for me to take sannyasa, so he gave me some money and a happy farewell and sent me on my way. I spent one year wandering, but during that period I lived with a very good swami for six months and he taught me all about the tantric system. However, I came to understand that this swami was not the person with whom I had to live and work, so I left and again began to search for my place in the world. I came to Rishikesh and an old swami guided me to Swami Sivananda. When I met Swami Sivananda, I realized that this was the end of my journey and I lived with him for the prescribed period of twelve years.

After twelve years of ashram life, I wandered all over India, Afghanistan, Tibet, Nepal, Burma and Ceylon on foot, by bullock cart, horse cart, train and boat. During this period I met hundreds of people who wanted my help. I was young and lean and looked good, and people were impressed by my personality and erudition. I found that everyone was suffering, either from mental problems, physical problems or psychic diseases. They had rheumatism, high and low blood pressure, insomnia, insanity, impotency and a thousand and one other diseases. I realized that although I knew a way for myself, I did not have an answer for them.

While I was living with my guru, I spent all my time serving him, purifying myself and developing awareness of my inner being so that I might realize the oneness of life. However, this approach could not work on the masses who were weak, infirm, devoid of willpower, cowardly, timid and nervous. For them, the way had to be different. Medicine was definitely not the way because the doctors too had failed.

After eight years of wandering, I came to Bihar and spent some years exploring the methods by which people could be helped. One day, almost by accident, a man came to me complaining of high blood pressure, hyperacidity and insomnia. I happened to know some simple yogic practices for these problems, so I taught them to him. After a few weeks, to his great relief and to my even greater surprise, he came to me completely cured. I was surprised because up to that point I

had thought yogasanas were just exercises and nothing more. I did not have much interest in them because I believed in Vedanta. I believed there was no need for asanas, pranayama or bhakti. One had only to remember *Aham Brahmasmi*, 'I am Brahman'.

For that time on, I started to practise everything myself. I practised all the asanas, pranayamas, shatkarmas and everything else that is meant by yoga. Simultaneously, I taught what little I knew to the people who came to me, and reports came back saying that everyone was getting better. This is how I came to teach yoga.

After some time, the ultimate outcome was that an ashram was established in Munger and it was formally inaugurated on 19 January 1964. From that day onwards, the ashram has not only been full, it has been packed and overcrowded. In the beginning I purchased a few small cooking vessels, but now the pots and pans we use are so big that they have to be lifted by two or three strong people!

Since the ashram was opened, many things have happened all over the world. I have even taken the message of yoga to those countries where the language is completely unknown to me. All of Latin America is reverberating with the message of yoga. Even in the African countries, which are supposed to be somewhat primitive, we have sown the seed of yoga. In the Eastern European countries, where Communism is so strong, yoga has also become as strong if not stronger than Communism. I see in yoga the fulfilment of a great purpose. Although it helps in alleviating the sufferings of man, ultimately it brings one to higher consciousness.

4

The Value of a Mantra

Many people take mantra diksha from a guru without understanding the purpose of the mantra. They do not really know how to utilize it properly and they are ignorant of its true value. At the Festival of Health held in Bogota, Colombia, South America, in October 1980, Swami Satyananda revealed the secret of mantra.

When one accepts a mantra from his guru, he is receiving a sound of great power. Whether the mantra is given by me or by another guru, you should be aware that you have in your possession one of the most precious things in life. Everything can fail you, but your mantra never will. Do not look at it merely from the religious point of view. You must see the mantra from the practical point of view.

Just as you sow a seed, you must plant the mantra deep within so that in the course of time it will permeate your whole being. Every morning before you commence your daily activities, and at night before you retire to your bed, you should repeat your mantra. Take your mala and sit down quietly in a comfortable meditative posture. The spinal cord should be upright and straight and the eyes should be gently closed. Hold the mala near your chest and move one bead with every repetition of the mantra. The mantra can be repeated mentally or verbally. If your mind is turbulent, repeat the mantra verbally. If it is reasonably calm and quiet, say the mantra mentally without moving your lips or producing a sound.

Always start your mala rotation from the first bead after the *sumeru*, the junction point of the mala. Supposing your mantra is *Om Aim Namah*, every time you say *Om Aim Namah* move one bead. Like this, repeat the mantra one hundred and eight times, moving the beads in coordination with each repetition. When you complete one round of mala rotation, turn the mala in your hand and commence another round. Never cross the *sumeru*. In this manner, practise as many rounds as time allows. If you can devote ten minutes to the practice, that is perfect, but if you can only spare five minutes, that is also good.

When you are repeating the mantra there should be no tension or suppression. Let your mind be free. Even if you practise without concentration, the mantra will do its job. In the course of time you will find that your mind has come to the point of unification by itself. No effort is required from your side.

Those who suffer from nervousness, fear, anxiety and other acute mental manifestations should always keep a small mala of twenty-seven beads with them. Whenever they are free, even if it is just for a few minutes before lunch, after dinner, while talking to someone, waiting for the bus or train, or while watching television, they can repeat the mantra mentally.

Practise the mantra whenever you are idle, during the day or night, whether you are thinking sensible things or useless things. You can even practise when you are eating chocolate, drinking coffee or taking alcohol. If you keep your mind busy with the mantra whenever it is free, in the course of time, you will find that the mind no longer wanders like a vagabond. The mind which had no base now has a point to which it can return. Through this simple practice, those suffering from nervousness, fear and depression will be able to bring about a great transformation in their mental state. Mantra is a very powerful tool for handling all the manifestations of the mind.

Throughout our lives we have been thinking and thinking, almost incessantly. Just imagine what a huge book you would fill if you were to register each and every thought you

had since the age of five! From today, keep a written account of each and every thought you have. In a very short time they will amount to millions. Then, one fine day, take your diary and a red pencil. Sit down quietly and read each thought you have recorded. Ask yourself, "Was that necessary?" If the answer is no, strike it off. If you are perfectly honest with yourself, I'm sure you will find almost ninety-nine percent of your thoughts were unnecessary.

This means that your mental energy was wasted on all those thought processes. Every time you think, you are drawing a lot of energy from your storehouse of prana. As long as you are playing a transistor radio it is consuming the battery, and if you leave it on all day, the battery will soon be flat. In the same way, if you squander away your prana shakti in endless thought processes, your battery will soon be flat. However, if you have a method by which you can conserve your prana shakti, you will have a lot of vitality. Now if you can understand that thinking consumes energy and mantra conserves energy, then you will realize the secret of mantra.

Most of us would have strong willpower if only we had a base on which to centre our minds. Then we would not suffer mentally or emotionally. Our sufferings are not due to any divine curse. They are our own creation; they are the result of our mismanagement of the great power that is in our hearts and minds. We have misused it and today we lie here impotent. Our minds are dull, our memories are cloudy and our hearts are broken by anxiety.

So, to all of you who have a mantra and to those of you who are about to receive one, I will remind you once again that everything in life can fail, but the mantra never will. Every morning, when you have finished your asanas and pranayama, take your mala and sit down for ten minutes. Close your eyes, relax your body and mind. Forget your name, forget your home and forget your environment. Just repeat your mantra, immerse yourself into it and become the mantra itself.

5

Combating Karma

Swami Satyananda defines karma, samskaras and archetypes. He also explains how some karmas can be changed or harmonized through willpower, karma yoga and spiritual life. Recorded on 2 September 1980 at the Transmission Seminar Sri Swamiji conducted in Chamarande, France.

Karma is the chain of actions created by man in his life. Or, in other words, it is the effects of all the activities in life. Karmas are threefold. There are those that we are performing now, those that we have already performed and those that have been manifesting in the form of destiny. Now, the karma which we are performing at the moment can always be changed by our willpower. The karma which we have already performed can be harmonized if we lead a spiritual life, but the karma which has taken the form of destiny cannot be revoked; we have to undergo it.

I will give you a very simple example. You have a loaded revolver in your pocket. That's one stage. You hold a loaded revolver in your hand and you are ready to shoot. If you want, you can put the revolver back in your pocket. That's another stage. You have pressed the trigger of a loaded revolver and the shot has been fired. It's done. Destiny, like the revolver, has been shot. It can not be revoked. You cannot alter your destiny, you must face it.

If you are an ignorant or worldly person, you will undergo your destiny with pain. You will cry and weep and break your heart. But if you are a *jnani* or a man of knowledge, you can face your destiny with cheerfulness. You don't grieve and you don't ruin your health, you just face it. When Socrates was imprisoned and sentenced to death, he was happy. He accepted his destiny and never tortured his brain over it. Whether you face the situations of life like an ignorant person or a *jnani*, in any case it is the quality of the soul which is responsible for the experience of destiny.

Now, we come to another aspect of karma. The karmas which we have already committed are accumulated, but they have not matured. They are in a dormant potential state like seeds, and they can be mitigated by living an austere and disciplined life. That is why people visit the saints, go on pilgrimages or get initiated into mantra and spiritual life, because spiritual initiation and spiritual activities harmonize the karma. However, the most effective means of harmonizing karma is through karma yoga.

Karma yoga means to act without any selfish motives. If you can work with dedication and detachment, this is karma yoga and it will purify the dross of karma. That is why in the olden days householders used to visit the ashrams. They lived there for some time and participated in the ashram activities. They never got any money, remuneration, certificates or diplomas.

In the ashrams, kings and ordinary people lived equally and in a very natural and harmonious way. Of course the lifestyle was completely different from that which existed in the homes. It was specifically designed so an aspirant could purge his karmas. In the same way that you undergo a process of purging when you have been stuffing yourself with too much rubbish food and then you get diarrhoea, purging takes place with karmas and the mind. It may cause a lot of suffering and inconvenience at first, but it is purification. When your mind is overwhelmed by thoughts and when you experience too much passion, excitement and emotions, you must understand that you are purging on the psychological

plane. And, at this time, it would be very beneficial for you to expose yourself to ashram life.

Now the times have changed and not everybody can go to ashrams because they don't exist in every part of the world. Nowadays, when people are planning to go to an ashram, they want to know if centrally heated rooms are available. They think an ashram is like a hotel where they can learn kriya yoga. Therefore, the ashrams you see today may not be exactly in accordance with the traditional type, but the lifestyle does offer the same possibility of bringing about inner purification.

Now I will explain karma in a different way. Every action as momentum and at the end of the momentum a seed drops. First the seed is in the form of a memory, then the memory is transformed into a samskara, or let us say an archetype. When memories become archetypes, you can't recognize them because they are in symbolic form. They manifest in dreams and meditation, and in our thinking processes, even if we don't know it. Let me give you an example.

A man loses his beloved wife, and after some time this experience of loss becomes an archetype. Once an event is transformed into a symbolic form, it is no longer pictorial but vibrational. Now, three years after the loss of his wife, the man dreams of a lotus in a lake. He sees a bird swoop down and pluck the lotus. The lotus falls into the lake and disappears. This is the manifestation of the archetype associated with the memory of his wife's death.

These archetypes are known as samskaras, and every experience is a memory and every memory becomes a samskara. Samskaras are not decipherable, but they are potential. If you take a seed and cut it open, you can't see a lotus, an apricot or an apple in it. It is a dormant potential state and unless you are a gardener you can't say what sort of seed it is. Likewise, your consciousness is filled with such seeds. Not one, but millions and trillions of them.

Man's consciousness is like an ocean. It has untold drops of karma and therefore it is very difficult to put an end to all

this. So what to do? The best thing is to let karma happen, and at the same time, try to create more positive karmas. When you practise yoga and live a spiritual life, you are producing another category of karma. It is positive, and positive overpowers the negative.



6

The Place of Karma Yoga in Ashram Life

For most people, the concept of karma yoga is something completely new. Even in ashrams, where the daily activities are based on karma yoga, most inmates have failed to realize its purpose and therefore underestimate its relevance in their spiritual life. However, if one can just cultivate a dispassionate attitude to the work at hand, an ordinary task can be transformed into an act of sadhana. During Swami Satyananda's visit to Barcelona, Spain, in September 1980, he spoke along these lines.

Once you have realized the importance of karma yoga, then the quality of your work improves, and any karma becomes karma yoga. It is noble attitude of the aspirant that transforms an ordinary karma into karma yoga. Whether you practise karma yoga through the body, the mind, the speech or the senses, the objective should be clear. Whatever you do must be done with a dispassionate attitude and for the purpose of self purification. Purification of *chitta*, the mind, is the objective.

The attitude should be one of non-involvement or detachment. As this is a difficult concept to explain, I will clarify it with an example. You and I both own a business. We may prosper or we may fail. Whereas you are only concerned with the business and are not at all worried about the results, I have expectations. If you are successful and make a lot of profit, you put the money in the bank. If you meet with failure, you

simply close down the business. However, for me, success is of vital importance. If I make a lot of money, oh, I am very happy, and if my business fails, high blood pressure and heart attack are likely to follow.

Now, every person has an attitude to the karma, the act he is doing. There are two types of attitudes: one is based on attachment and the other is based on non-attachment. Do you understand the difference between the two? Supposing I have a babysitter who comes to my home every day to take care of my child. My child becomes sick and I pay the babysitter extra to stay with him at night and administer his medicines. She keeps a vigil throughout the night, and because it is part of her duty she does not sleep at night. I also do not sleep at night because I am so anxious about my child. Neither of us can sleep, but can you see the difference? She does not sleep because she has obligations of duty, and I do not sleep because I am bound by my attachment.

One day the babysitter comes to me and says, “Sir, I must go home because my child is very sick.” I plead with her to stay, but she cannot be persuaded and leaves on the next train. For the whole night she is travelling on that train, but she cannot sleep at all. Why? Because now her child is involved. So it is clear that one’s attitude to the karma depends on one’s relationship to the purpose.

The central teaching of the *Bhagavad Gita* consists of one important stanza: “Your right is to work only, but never to its fruits.” However, we find that everybody has certain expectations from the duties they perform.

In many ashrams, monasteries and institutions, I have found the inmates have not assessed the value of karma yoga correctly. They think they are only working in order to keep the institution functioning, and this is not a very clear picture of karma yoga. The institution may benefit, but this is certainly not the aim. The real purpose of karma yoga is to provide a means for self-purification.

When you do not work, the mind is free and it wanders from one useless thought to another. It behaves just like a monkey

in a cage, moving up and down, this way and that way, but not doing anything useful or tangible. This dissipation of energy creates unnecessary impressions in the mind and develops the habit of fantasizing. Then so many samskaras are accumulated, and when you try to meditate, or when kundalini is waking from its slumber, all these impressions explode and pollute the mental background. Therefore, the purpose of karma yoga is to prevent the mind from becoming an idle vagabond. If the mind is kept properly occupied through karma yoga, in the course of time it becomes pure and clean.

Another great mistake of many ashram inmates is that they become side-tracked by power, position and status. They identify so much with being the secretary, director, in-charge, cashier or accountant that they don't even know why they have come to an ashram. Surely they did not come to accumulate more karma! The ashram is supposed to be a place where you can unburden it. As such, it is necessary to have the correct attitude to karma.

Of course, when I first entered ashram life I did not know what karma yoga was. I had read about it, but had not experienced it. However, I involved myself fully in the ashram work and in just a few years I discovered that the work I did during the day greatly improved the quality of my fifteen minutes of meditation. In fact, before I came to the ashram I was having a problem with my meditation. At a certain stage in my practice I would always confront a big curtain which I could never proceed beyond. It seemed as if my experiences always came to a dead end. I did not know what to do and I had sought the advice of many people.

When I met Swami Sivananda, that was the first question I asked him. He told me to stay in the ashram, work hard and purify myself. I immediately started to work. I used to clean all the cooking vessels, carry water from the Ganges to the mountain top, collect bricks and firewood, do typing and construction work, and walk five miles to the market, purchase the vegetables and carry them back on my head. During this period I would work each day until nine pm. Then I used to

take a bath and sit on the banks of the Ganges for meditation. I would practise mantra and my inner space was always illumined. There were no thoughts or impressions; there was no past or future. I did not even exist; there was only the mantra. It was just like a dream. Before I knew it, it would be three or four am. I was not sleeping at all. This continued for many months, but I was not aware that I did not sleep.

Now, when I think about that period I am surprised. I know I was not crazy, but how could I have spent each night in padmasana without sleeping when I had been working so hard throughout the day? We were also living on the minimum amount of food. In the ashram there was only enough food to pacify the hunger, and that was all. There was no mineral, vitamin or protein content, but my physical energy was so superb that even if I had to run sixty miles I could do it.

Ashram life is like a dream, a very pleasant dream which passes in a very unpleasant manner. No, not unpleasant, let us say it passes in a very inconvenient and uncomfortable manner. If an ashram does not emphasize karma yoga, it will not be able to help anyone. Karma yoga is the basis of spiritual life. Bhakti yoga is the superstructure and raja yoga is the plaster and inner decoration. Unless you have a solid foundation, you cannot make a beautiful house. Plaster and decorations are not enough. Therefore, throughout the ages, ashrams have always been places where both the guru and his disciples had to work very hard.

In Australia, we purchased some land sixty miles from Sydney and about twenty miles from the nearest post office and shopping centre. For many years we did not have electricity or a telephone, and even now we don't have hot water or proper bathrooms. We constructed some simple huts where the sannyasins could stay, but living conditions have never been easy. There is often a shortage of water. It is so cold there in winter that even if you drink coffee every hour it does not help. Many sannyasins leave the ashram. They say, "If I have to suffer so much because I have become a sannyasin, then this life is no good. I don't want it anymore."

Ashrams are not meant to provide the comforts of a home. Life in an ashram has to be different from the life you lead in the city. Your belongings must be minimal and you must be able to adapt to the spirit of community life. Jealousy and competition should not arise, although there is a healthy and positive form of competition which is acceptable: “He works for twelve hours a day, I will work for sixteen. This swami speaks as little as possible, I will speak even less. She only takes two meals a day, I am going to start taking one only.” This is a healthy type of competition which keeps a swami motivated, but the other form is negative: “Oh, he is eating bread and butter, I will have that too, but I will put cheese on mine. She has four dhotis, I will have six.” Well, these are just a few jokes of ashram life. I am sure all the swamis here have experienced some of them.



7

Why Have an Ashram?

Swami Satyananda speaks to his Spanish devotees about the inauguration of a new ashram in Barcelona. He talks about the purpose of ashrams, the reason why so many sannyasins are dedicating their lives to yoga, and the ultimate aim of the yogic science. Taped at Satyanandashram Barcelona, Spain, on 19 May 1980.

We have many swamis teaching yoga in different parts of Barcelona. These swamis have devoted their lives to the evolution of mankind. They are dedicated to yoga because it is a science which is concerned with man's spiritual evolution. Of course, yoga is also concerned with the maintenance of the physical body, and more recently it has been acclaimed as a healing science. As well as this, it is concerned with developing a calm and peaceful mind and it is also a philosophy. However, the ultimate purpose of yoga is to evolve the superman in man, to express the mind behind the mind, because our present state of consciousness is very limited.

Our position at the moment is transitory; it is not the ultimate. Man is much more than what he thinks he is today, and through yoga it is possible for man to realize his greater and higher self. The conflicts and chaos we see around us and the sufferings we experience and witness in others have an answer in yoga, because yoga transforms the quality of mind and spirit. If the mind is not transformed, then unhappiness emanates from everything. Even if you have good health,

great wealth, a prosperous business, satisfaction in your work and a good family and home, if your mind is not balanced, these things cannot give you happiness.

Therefore, let us all understand one truth. Pain and pleasure are only experiences of the mind. If you have mastery over the mind, you can transform an experience of pain into an experience of pleasure. Transcend the mind and you have no pain or suffering. Yoga has a precise method for changing the quality of the mind. Just as you improve the quality of the body by exercise, or you improve the quality of your house by insulating and cement rendering it, in the same way, yoga can transform the quality of the mind.

The swamis here in Barcelona have understood this and they have dedicated their lives to the teaching of yoga. In the beginning there were four or five swamis and they were living here in Meridiana in this house. Later, a few more swamis came and we started another centre in this city. Now we have many more dedicated sannyasins, so we had to acquire a special place where they could all be housed in an environment which would be conducive to their spiritual development.

Although these swamis are dedicated to the teaching of yoga, they are still the products of your society. They have not dropped from heaven and, as such, they need to go through a process of self-evolution and spiritual unfoldment. Therefore, we decided to start an ashram for the swamis. Only three or four days back we acquired a suitable place. It is spacious and solitary, even though it is in the heart of the city. Three times this crowd can be accommodated there and more than twenty-five sannyasins will be housed there.

That ashram will be a heaven, not only for the swamis, but for all of you as well. There are many spiritually minded people, but they do not find surroundings which are conducive for the protection and growth of their spiritual life. They are not safe in this world of temptations. They need a place where they can live spiritually, and at the same time serve society. Many of our swamis serve society in banks, shops and business houses, and in addition they lead their own spiritual

lives. They teach yoga in different areas of the city and work constantly without any selfish motives. These people are not just freaks, they are dedicated persons with a certain type of enlightenment.

Everyone is responsible for their own awakening and their own downfall. In this world, both good and evil exist side by side. Light and darkness follow each other. Those who are enlightened are very much aware of the fact that they have to develop greatness and nobility in their hearts. Every being is like a delicate young plant. You have to protect it for some time, otherwise wild animals will trample it down. Insects and pests might devour it completely, or frost will destroy it in one night. Therefore, everybody must do something to protect this young plant, which is his inner self.

Your wealth and beautiful homes cannot protect the inner self. Your intellect cannot provide protection, nor can the police and military forces. Only you can protect your inner self, and in order to do this you will have to develop a different quality of mind. Who is going to direct the destiny of mankind? Who is going to be your master or guide? Who is the controller or director of your life? It should be you, but at the moment, temptations and passions govern your life. If you have a strong mind, you can resist every temptation. But how to develop such a mind? Through yoga you become your own master and gain mastery over the forces of life.

Therefore, this ashram, which will be inaugurated tomorrow, will be a very important landmark in the history of Barcelona. It is necessary for you to help us develop it, but it is more important for you to feel that it is necessary. You must understand how important yoga is for our culture. Intrinsically man is spiritual, but if we do not protect and develop our inner lives, then man is bound to meet with disaster. Remember, poverty is no vice and wealth is no virtue. An unstable mind is man's liability, but a balanced mind is man's greatest asset.

8

Training the Mind through Yoga Nidra

In this talk given by Swami Satyananda in Zinal, Switzerland, on 9 September 1980, he explains how it is possible to penetrate the depths of the mind through the simple practice of yoga nidra.

Yoga nidra is one of the most powerful techniques of tantra. I have only renovated and reconstructed this practice. For many years of my life, I have been able to help unfortunate souls through the practice of yoga nidra. When you practise yoga nidra, you are opening the deeper phases of your mind. At this moment your intellectual mind is operating, but when you are able to relax, the subconscious and unconscious mind opens.

The subconscious mind is a very obedient disciple and immediately carries out the orders that you put to it. If you know how to practise yoga nidra, you can train your subconscious mind completely. Then the ordinary mind and intellect will follow it.

If you know how to teach yoga nidra, then the nature of the mind can be changed, diseases can be cured, and the creative genius in human beings can be restored. The subconscious and the unconscious mind are the most powerful forces in a human being. This simple practice of yoga nidra has the capacity to penetrate into the depths of the human mind.

Therefore, when you practise yoga nidra, you must completely relax because this not a practice in concentration. It is opening the doors of your personality. Let the person who

is guiding you in yoga nidra keep on speaking and you keep on listening. If you happen to miss his instructions, it does not matter. As long as you continue to listen to him, that's all right.

I have experimented with yoga nidra on animals and I have succeeded. I had a dog which I trained in just one instruction – nobody should touch my bed. The dog was very docile, but if anyone touched my bed, he became furious and violent. Then I trained one disciple who was completely illiterate. He had never been to any school and he never cared to read the scriptures. He was not at all serious about spiritual affairs. Today he is one of the beacon lights in my mission. I taught him the *Ramayana*, *Gita*, Upanishads, Bible and science during yoga nidra, and he has responded very well. As he grows in age, everything I taught him during yoga nidra is coming out.

If you know a person with bad habits, don't tell him anything directly; that will not work. Let him go into yoga nidra and wait until he is completely relaxed. Then when you tell him not to do something, he will listen. The logical, restless mind can be disobedient, but the yoga nidra mind is an absolutely obedient disciple. In yoga nidra if I tell you to do something, you have to do it; you have no choice. Therefore, yoga nidra should be learned from a very fine and good-natured teacher. Otherwise an evil-minded teacher can put you into difficulties.

Yoga nidra is regarded as a tantric practice, because in tantra evolution of the mind should become a spontaneous matter. You don't have to fight with your nature, habits and limitations, because by doing so you are creating animosity within yourself. That is why most people who try to correct themselves through the religious path become schizophrenic. For the last century, the psychologists have been telling us, "If you have a fault, accept it. You cannot remove it by hatred." But how to do it? Go down to the lower recesses of the mind and cut the root, then the tree will die by itself.

The unconscious mind is the base of man's normal and abnormal behaviour; the base of all that we are is in the subcon-

scious and unconscious realms. Therefore, why keep on cutting the branches and the leaves? Yoga nidra is a practice which will help you to dive deep into the depths of your mind.

You have to make a sankalpa, and this should be repeated in every yoga nidra. Anything in life can fail you, but the sankalpa made in yoga nidra will never fail. Man is weak because he is depending merely on his intellect and the information from his senses. But once you open the doors of the deeper mind and you repose in yoga nidra, you are at the root of creativity.

In Hindu mythology the symbol of yoga nidra is Lord Narayana, reposing on the ocean of milk on a very large serpent with many hoods. The beautiful Lakshmi is massaging his feet. From his navel a lotus flower emanates, and seated in the pericarp is Lord Brahma, symbol of the unconscious. This means that in yoga nidra, the unconscious manifests. The Lord Narayana is in repose; your blanket is the serpent, and the floor is the ocean of milk.



9

The Birth of Yoga Nidra

Swami Satyananda tells his disciples how he developed the practice of yoga nidra. Recorded in a small satsang at Bihar School of Yoga, Munger, in 1976.

When I was living in Rishikesh, there was a Sanskrit school nearby, whose principal was a very old saint for whom Swami Sivananda had great respect. In those days, no one bothered to learn Sanskrit except poor boys who found no employment and had no work to do in their own homes. Such boys used to come to the Sanskrit school, and whenever the saint went out, they would run away with something or other. So Swami Sivananda used to ask me to stay there and guard the place every time the saint went out. I would lie down quietly on a bed but stay awake until 3 am. Then I would fall into a deep sleep. The boys would get up at 4 am, bathe and perform sandhya, pooja and prayer, but I never heard them. I would get up at 6 am and return to the ashram, not knowing what mantras they had recited at 4 am.

Once I attended a function at a nearby ashram and these brahmacharis were called upon to chant some Sanskrit verses. During the function, they recited *Mangala Charan*. When they said, *Aa no bhadrah*, I felt that I had heard these words somewhere before, and as I listened the feeling grew stronger. I tried in vain to remember where and when I had

heard these words. I had neither read nor written them, so why did they sound so familiar?

After giving this a great deal of thought, I still could not understand the reason, so I went up to the *acharya* or teacher who was seated near the boys and asked him. He told me that I had been sleeping in the place where these mantras were recited daily and my subtle body had listened to them. This straightforward, simple and truthful explanation was the birth of yoga nidra.

I kept on thinking about the subtle body listening to the words. Later I read the tantra shastras, and when practising tantra, I understood that the subtle body could be taught. This convinced me that a person who was asleep could be taught just the same as a person in the waking state, and I mulled this over in my mind for some time.

When I first settled in Munger, someone gave me a tape recorder, so with it I experimented on a boy who was fast asleep like a buffalo. Even if he had been carried from one room to another he would not have known. After he fell asleep, I used to play verses from the *Bhagavad Gita* and other texts on the recorder which was kept near him. Then I would lecture him in good English. I made a routine practice of this for five months. That boy, who was Swami Niranjana, never went to school and never had lessons from anyone. Today he gives lectures in English and if you heard him, you would realize that subtle teaching leaves a very deep impression.

I am not criticizing school teaching or educational systems; I am explaining yoga nidra, during which a person is asleep, but his subtle body is awake and can receive impressions and orders and be taught.

When I read psychology, I learned that military experts do the same thing. They brainwash prisoners-of-war by repeating the same words to them continuously. When I read about communism, I found that they did things like repeating 'crows are white' or 'donkeys have horns' over and over again. Nobody would accept this in the waking state, but in the subtle state it could be impressed on the mind, and later

if you said that donkeys had horns, they would accept it. All the techniques of brainwashing in this world are based on the principles of yoga nidra.

When I put these principles into practice and experimented with them, I realized that yoga nidra could be used very beneficially. For instance, if a child wets his bed at night, let him sleep for a minute or two, then wake him and tell him, “Listen, if you wish to pass urine, go to the bathroom.” After a few days you will see what a change comes over this child.

There was a lady from a good family who was worried because her husband was a drunkard. I told her to stop asking him to give up drinking and instead to buy the alcohol for him, and if he asked her to drink too, she should do so. She became thoughtful and was afraid that I was condemning her, a woman from a good family, to hell. But she started doing it, thinking that the words of a sannyasin can work magic. She did just what I suggested. After a few days I told her to teach her husband yoga nidra. When he was practising yoga nidra, she gave him some good advice. Even though he didn’t like it he accepted the advice, but he gave up yoga nidra.

In tantra, they repeat *karatala angushtabhyam namah*, which is said to circulate the prana shakti and take the awareness to the spot mentioned. It awakens the unconscious mind. The conscious mind sleeps while the unconscious mind becomes more and more awake. The unconscious mind in its awakened state is very receptive. At that time any resolution that you make will come true. This is a great and deep practice and it is very important that you do not misuse it. Do not make resolutions concerning minor or negative matters. If you make a bad resolve concerning others, this will surely affect your mind far more than theirs, so please don’t misuse yoga nidra in this way.

When I learned the secrets of this sadhana in the tantra shastras, I changed it into the simple form of yoga nidra and used it extensively. When I teach yoga nidra to patients, their physical body relaxes, all tensions are released and the consciousness and subtle body are charged with energy. This

energy gives them the power to overcome disease. Today, heart disease, cancer and many mental illnesses are successfully being treated through yoga nidra. I have made it so simple and easy to practise that in the future everyone will be able to relax and resolve all mental, physical, emotional, family and social tensions through yoga nidra, the great and ancient practice of psychic sleep.



10

Yoga Nidra and Negativity

Here Sri Swamiji explains why it is a mistake to inhibit negative thoughts and fantasies. They are harmless and are a natural means of eliminating mental and emotional toxins. Recorded on 7 September 1980 at the Transmission Seminar held in Chamarande, France.

Negative thoughts are nothing unnatural to the mind. In fact, when negative thoughts come to you, it is a very positive sign. Where do negative thoughts come from? They come from within you. This means that in your consciousness there is some negative stuff. If you feel like vomiting sometimes, what does it mean? It only means that there is fermented acidity within your system. Should it come out or should it not? From the health point of view, I would say that it should. Toxins should be eliminated whether they are in the body, mind or emotions.

Therefore, during the practice of yoga nidra, if negative thoughts come, don't let them disturb you. Give them a free passage. If you allow them free expression, at first your yoga nidra practice may not appear to be successful, but after some time the negative thoughts and all the turbulence will automatically cease and tranquillity will prevail.

The greatest tragedy of man is that he doesn't know how to deal with his negative thoughts. In fact, the mistake is with religions. They have not dealt with man's problems in a scientific manner. Instead, they have said, "Don't think like that. Don't

do this. Don't agree with that." This is dictatorial ordinance. Man and the society cannot be rectified by dictatorship; there must be a very systematic and scientific approach.

If in your country there are forty thousand criminals and you spot them and kill them all, do you think that would eliminate criminality? No, criminality is an ever growing process. Likewise, negativity is also an ever growing process. Therefore, you have to develop understanding and a very positive attitude.

Who thinks negative thoughts? And who makes a sankalpa? The same mind, the same you. One minute you make a positive sankalpa, then your mind thinks something negative and you try to eliminate that thought. So you are fighting with yourself; you are creating animosity between yourself and yourself. This means you are causing a split in your personality. There should be no friction or conflict, and there should not be any animosity or dissension in your personality. There must be harmony. If you have two sons and one is a good boy and the other is bad, what do you do? You love both. You feed both and you consider both to be your children. You don't shoot the bad boy. So, in the same way, the mind has two vrittis.

Now, in his *Raja Yoga Sutras*, Patanjali says the vrittis of the mind should be controlled. How can you do this? By having a braking system, just like you have in a car. You don't use the brake all the time; it is only necessary when the car is about to collide. Likewise, you must only check your thoughts when they are going to create an accident in life. Often the thoughts are merely fantasies or imaginings. They are called innocent negative thoughts. Now why do you fight with these innocent and harmless thoughts? If your car is travelling smoothly and there is no red light and there is no chance of a collision, why do you apply the brake? If you keep using the brake indiscriminately when you are travelling at a fast speed, you are bound to overturn your car one day.

Therefore, in yoga nidra, or in any spiritual practice, or even in your day-to-day life, you have to discriminate between the harmless negative thoughts and the potentially danger-

ous negative thoughts. If the thoughts are harmless, let them come because you are only eliminating your emotional toxins and unburdening the subconscious mind. Even if you don't want to do it, nature will enforce it. The process of dream is a natural means of elimination. If our dreams were suppressed, we would go mad. Dreams are very important and healthy channels for elimination and expression of the subconscious. And so are fantasies.

Do you know what fantasy is? It is the mind in dreams. You are able to fly and you visit the moon, Mars, Venus, Jupiter and Saturn. You become a multimillionaire or billionaire, a president or prime minister, an eminent ballerina or Miss Universe. Such fantasies are very important for the growth of the human mind, and they should not be checked, even during meditation. You must remember this point. You might get fed up with your thoughts and fantasies and say, "I can't meditate. Every time I try, my mind flies." However, all the wise people have said that fantasy is very important for the growth of human consciousness.

Now, there are negative fantasies like killing someone, committing a sexual assault, cheating or stealing, taking revenge on someone or trying to kill oneself. Such thoughts come to everybody some time or other. Sometimes they come gradually and steadily, and at other times they come suddenly. In some people they come early in life, whereas in others they come with maturity. If you suppress them, they will come during middle age. Often, people over the age of forty-five have a sudden explosion of these negative thoughts.

However, I have come to a conclusion about negative thoughts. It is best not to interfere with nature's process. Completely forget what religions have said. If you are practising yoga nidra and suddenly there is an upsurge of negative thoughts, don't be disturbed. Continue, day after day, week after week and month after month. Surely they will come to an end, and finally you will succeed in your practice.

11

The Role of the Emotions and Intellect

During a satsang in Barcelona, Spain, in September 1980, somebody asked Swami Satyananda to explain why a person who showed no emotion in daily life could experience an uncontrollable outburst of emotions during satsang. In his reply, Sri Swamiji explained that most people misuse their intellect and emotions, and that the emotions should only be used as a channel to higher experience.

Everybody has emotions, and at various times most people are able to experience an enormous warmth welling up from within. However, there are some people who seem to be cold and emotionless. In the general events of life they are not able to express their warmth and feelings. If they see a beautiful flower, intellectually they understand it is beautiful, but they are unable to express that emotionally. Or if they witness a spectacular sunset or the most breathtaking view, they admire it intellectually, but they are not able to experience it emotionally. The same thing happens to them when they indulge in emotional or sexual interactions. Why? Because they are overwhelmed by their intellectuality. It is not that they don't have warmth and emotions. These they have, but they are protected and locked within.

Intellect is a very inefficient means to express emotion. You may talk in great detail about the beauty of a flower; you may write page after page on the sufferings of humanity, or compose volumes of verses on love for God, but you will

never feel it. When you join satsang you are exposed to an emotional temperature and climate. The intellect does not function at that time because nothing intellectual or logical is happening. There is only faith and understanding.

When an emotionally cold person is exposed to that temperature and heat, an explosion takes place and he begins to experience thrills. Then all the suppressed feelings start coming out. I have witnessed many people undergoing this experience during kirtan. Their eyes become irrigated, they sob, they cry, their whole body starts trembling and they fall to the floor. It's not a bad experience – it's neither painful nor frightening. Let us say it is an intense experience. During the emotional moments of life, either mooladhara chakra or some other chakra or nadi in the vertebral column is involved. And for that reason, everybody should expose themselves to satsang.

I will tell you something about myself. Right from the beginning of my life, I have not been one to react to emotions. If somebody I know dies, even if I have lived with that person, at the most I can sign a letter of condolence. All sorts of mishaps may occur, or someone may criticize and condemn me openly, but that does not matter. Even if a person owes me a large sum of money but is refusing to pay it back, I don't worry at all. But whenever I read the story of Rama and I come to certain events and passages, I break down and cry just like a child. I can weep like a mother who has lost her only baby, because all through life I have been dealing with every event intellectually.

I have understood that emotions are only meant for bhakti yoga and not for every little thing of this world. Nature has provided you with an intellect to deal with all the worldly matters. You can love and hate everybody intellectually, but the heart must be reserved for one thing only. When you hear the glory of God, when you sing his name, when you sit before a man of God, or when you are narrating or listening to his stories, at these time you should lock your intellect away and bring your emotions out.

I have practised this throughout my life and if you try it, you will find that every situation can be managed through an intellectual process. Running an ashram, living with disciples, receiving money and parting with it, giving advice to people, having interpersonal relationships, even the most intimate relationships, these are all intellectual affairs. The emotions should not be wasted on such matters, they are to be conserved.

Supposing there is a little mouse living in your kitchen and you want to get rid of it. You don't need to use a machine gun for that. In the same way, to deal with all the little things in life, you do not need to waste your emotions. Relationships with the whole world are cursory and they cannot or should not be so deep that they are rooted in the emotions. If the emotions are conserved and reserved for one purpose, they will serve as a swift vehicle leading you straight into a higher experience.

The reason why people do not have higher experiences is that they give their emotions to worldly things and their intellect to God. And so they fail in both areas. If you give your emotions and personality to the world, it will not pay you any dividend, you will only meet with disappointments, frustration, depression, disillusionment and disease. And if you give your intellect to God you will not get anywhere. You will have some funny ideas about God, you might pray and pray and pray, but to what avail? Therefore, you are failing spiritually and you are failing in your empirical affairs. Now reverse the situation – intellect for the world and emotions for God.

If you feel cold in all the affairs of life it is all right, but in satsang you must throw yourself open. You can express yourself like an innocent child. It doesn't matter what others will think, because if the people who come to satsang cannot understand the consequences of emotions, then they are only joining the satsang intellectually.

12

Satsang and Psychotherapy

Swami Satyananda discusses the psychological and spiritual significance of the guru-disciple relationship, the practice of satsang and the yogic lifestyle. Recorded in a satsang at Satyanandashram Barcelona, Spain, in September 1980.

The psychotherapist and the guru both have important roles to play. Where the work of the psychotherapist finishes, the work of the guru begins. So instead of comparing the two, let us connect them.

Of course, the guru can act as a psychotherapist, but that is not his primary motive. A psychotherapist is a person who helps you through a particular crisis in your life, but in the relationship with the guru, psychotherapy is spontaneous and ongoing. The guru's relationship with the disciple, his own personal life experience and his knowledge of the nature of the mind are such that after relieving his disciple of certain mental problems, he is then able to give him spiritual life.

That is why, right from the beginning, certain rules and regulations have been fixed. Not everybody can become a guru. In order to become a guru you must first have had a perfect discipleship. How can you become a lecturer or a professor in a university unless you have been a student? If you have only read some of the yoga sutras and yoga books and attended a few seminars here and there, you should not

think that you are a qualified guru. That is a very dangerous situation; such gurus need a psychotherapist.

If you treat someone's mind, and then leave him at that point, he will continue to have problems. Of course, at a certain level, sickness of the mind has to be treated, but there is no end to it. In my opinion, it has to be transcended rather than treated. The mind is a composition of the three gunas, which keep on assaulting it all the time. Therefore, a disciple should develop new tools of knowledge and experience with which to deal with the problems of the mind.

Similarly, we cannot really equate satsang with group therapy, even though we often try to explain satsang in these terms. The Sanskrit root *sat* means reality, divinity and purity; it represents the self or God. Satsang does not mean being in the company of many people; that is known as *sangha*, which means company or association. *Satsang* is being in the company of truth.

There are various types of satsang. You can close your eyes and practise satsang all alone. When you are reading a spiritual book which deals with the topics of reality, that is also a form of satsang. Satsang happens when you are with a group listening to the glory of divine being or the ways of purity and self-evolution. Hearing about the lives of those people who have suffered or lived for the divine experience is also satsang.

In satsang you may practise kirtan or meditation, but these are not satsang, they are only ways of conducting satsang. In satsang the most important thing is the constant movement of ideas related to the ultimate reality, divinity or highest being.

There are certain groups which I have come across in recent years in which people join together to do some practices and to help each other. There is a very simple, scientific explanation for this. If you put a grandfather clock with many other small clocks, you will find that initially, the movement of their pendulums does not coincide, but after some time all the clocks will be following the grandfather clock. This

experiment has been repeated many times. Similarly, when you play a violin, all the other violins in the room begin to resonate. If you listen carefully, you will find that the vibrations from the first violin are being transmitted through the inactive violins. The same thing also happens in a group when people get together to help each other.

In India, there is not much need for these group sessions because the social situation is still very well organized. If a group of people live together in a joint family or in an ashram situation, they begin to understand the nature of human psychology. They have an opportunity to see where they stand with one another. They are able to assess their own minds, their limitations and their faults, which is a great change from the modern culture.

In the West, particularly in the twentieth century, group therapy has become an important phenomenon. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the situation was different. There was a more compact and well knit family and community life. But in the last one hundred and fifty years, the social structure has been deteriorating bit by bit, and henceforth the need for group therapy has arisen.

However, we must remember that mind is not the ultimate reality; there is something beyond the mind. We only talk in terms of the mind because mind seems to be a barrier for many people. Actually, whatever we do in spiritual life is not done for the sake of the mind, but for the discovery of the universal spirit. Therefore, the path of psychotherapy can only be followed up to a certain extent; then there comes a point where it must be left behind. Psychoanalysis can definitely be of great use at a certain stage of development, but eventually it becomes a barrier and then you have to transcend it.

13

Alleviating Tension

Swami Satyananda talks about the different forms of tension man experiences and offers a yogic technique to alleviate each one of them. Recorded in Las Palmas, Canary Islands, on 23 September 1980.

The father of modern psychology, Dr Sigmund Freud, predicted that as the modern technological culture progressed, man would suffer from stresses and strains. And now of course we see that he was absolutely correct. Two thousand five hundred years ago in India, a very eminent thinker was born. His name was Patanjali and we say he was the father of human psychology. We call Dr Freud the father of modern psychology. Patanjali wrote a small booklet called *Raja Yoga Sutras*. It is a book of not more than five hundred words and throughout the book the theme is tension.

Whether you think too much or you don't think at all, you accumulate tensions. Whether you work physically or you do not work at all, you accumulate tensions. Whether you sleep too much or not at all, you accumulate tensions. Whether you take a heavy protein diet, a carbohydrate diet or a vegetarian diet, you accumulate tensions. And these tensions amass in the different layers of the human personality. They accumulate in the muscular, emotional and mental systems. Therefore, tensions are of three types: muscular, mental and emotional.

In yoga, we deal with the problems of tension with a wide periscope. We realize that if your mind is tense, your stomach

will also be tense. And if your stomach is tense, your heart must be tense too. And if your heart is tense, then your circulatory system is also tense. It is a vicious cycle of events. So therefore, in yoga, relaxation from tension is one of the chief concerns.

A few years ago, I witnessed a very convincing scientific demonstration, illustrating the beneficial effects of yogasanas on muscular tension in the human body. A scientist was measuring the change in muscular tension levels using an electromyograph (EMG). This is a machine which simultaneously measures the levels of electrical activity arising within the different muscle groups as the body performs asanas, or perhaps other gymnastic exercises.

Activity from sixteen different sets of muscles was recorded by means of sensitive recording electrodes inserted into the muscles. The EMG data record revealed that a man lying on his bed is by no means free of muscular tension. Even if he was not consciously aware of it, nevertheless, twenty units of tension remained in his muscular network.

Now, when that subject was asked to perform paschimotanasana, sitting up and bending forward to touch his toes, an immediate fall in the level of tension was registered in the spinal and back muscles, shoulder and neck muscles, hip muscles, hamstrings and calf muscles. By performing that one pose of paschimottanasana, the tension level in the whole of the posterior muscle chain actually dropped.

At first impression, the yogasanas may appear to increase the muscular tension in the body, but EMG studies reveal that this is not the case. Asanas actually develop coordinated and controlled relaxation in the various muscle groups, working in exactly the opposite way to other systems of exercise which aim at physical development. Therefore, it is a scientific recommendation that when you are feeling tense, you will benefit by performing paschimottanasana rather than taking recourse to your bed. This is because paschimottanasana does not strain the muscles but relaxes them.

In another study using the EMG apparatus, a person's muscular tension levels were measured while he was reclining

on an easy chair, and thirty-seven units of tension were recorded. As you know, when people become tense these days, they choose to relax in an easy chair with a cigarette or a bottle. What a primitive concept for civilized people!

Now, that same person was asked to perform bhujangasana, the cobra pose. In bhujangasana, the first impression is that there is increased tension in the muscles surrounding the spinal column, especially in the lumbosacral (lower) region of the back. There appears to be a focus of tension here, but the EMG experimental data actually showed a total absence of tension at this point, where the recording electrode measured zero. This means that when you are tense, especially when you feel aches in the back after a day at the desk, it is more scientific to seek relief by practising bhujangasana than by reposing in that blessed easy chair.

Now, I am coming to another form of tension. Many people here in Las Palmas suffer from respiratory congestion, which often results in bronchial asthma and an inability to breathe. Respiratory congestion is due to tension in the cerebral system. A shock can create that tension, or sometimes unhappiness alone can be the cause. But as there is no scientific evidence to support this, you attribute it to the climate. "It's too windy." "It's too foggy." "There's too much pollution here." But what about the cerebral pollution? Do you know how it is created? When your mind is full of negative thoughts and you are plagued with fears, anxieties, anger and jealousy, you create mental and emotional tensions. Now, respiratory congestion is regulated and guided by mental, emotional and muscular tensions.

There is an important posture which is practised by both the Muslims and Hindus, and the early Christians used to practise it as well. Its name is shashankasana. Sit in vajrasana and bend forward, placing your forehead on the ground. You can clasp your hands behind the back, or bring them forward to rest on the floor in front of the head. This is not a religious exercise, but a scientific posture which was given through the religious faiths. In this posture, the whole body,

from top to toe, is free from tension. If you practise this for fifteen minutes in the morning and evening, and for as long as you can whenever you feel an attack coming on, you will relieve yourself from respiratory congestion and emotional tension.

Now, coming to mental tension. Sit either in vajrasana or the lotus posture, with your spine upright and straight, and get ready to practise pranayama. Take twenty rapid breaths through the left nostril, then through the right nostril, and finally through both nostrils together. This is one round. Practise five rounds. This particular breathing is known as bhasrika pranayama, and whenever you practise it you will feel fresh and relaxed.

Now, what to do about the emotional tensions we experience with life and death, success and failure, love and hatred? All these things cause emotional tensions, and all of us experience them day in and day out all throughout life. Therefore, we should learn how to eliminate these tensions. Although yoga has many excellent techniques to offer, I will only describe one. Sit in any comfortable meditative asana, close your eyes and start repeating a mantra. If any thought comes to your mind, don't try to block it. Just see what it is and continue repeating your mantra. Do not be disturbed by any kind of thought or feeling. Whether you have a vicious thought or a pleasant thought, do not interfere with the thought process. Bad memories should come, impure thoughts must arise and your purging must be complete. Then you can rid yourself of emotional tension.

When your thoughts are suppressed, your mental energy gets blocked, but when you allow your thoughts free movement, then your mind becomes relaxed. This practice is known as antar mouna. *Antar* means 'internal', *mouna* means 'silence', therefore, *antar mouna* means 'inner silence'. In order to silence the mind you do not have to suppress and punish it. When your stomach is bad, what do you do? You allow it to purge. At first, purging can cause discomfort, and if you have to go to the toilet frequently, it can be very tiring, but

ultimately it will relax the whole stomach. As it is with the stomach, so it is with the mind.

Our minds are overloaded with various kinds of thoughts. Where there are complexes and conflicts, there is schizophrenia. There are worries, anxieties and passions. There are love and hatred, fear and insecurity, and many more things. Some we know and some we don't, but all these thoughts are lying hidden in our mind. Sometimes they express themselves during dreams or sickness, but it is far better if you cleanse all these grosser elements from the mind through the process of meditation. This is the gist of the *Raja Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali.

Man must be able to master the different realms of his life. If you can understand this, then you are ready for the formula. You need only practise a few yogasana and pranayamas every day and dedicate ten to fifteen minutes to mantra and meditation.



14

Siddhasana and the Heart

Swami Satyananda discusses the importance of siddhasana in stabilizing cardiac function and checking the emotional and sexual drives in man. Recorded at the Zinal Conference, Switzerland, in September 1980.

Medical scientists have found an important connection between the reproductive metabolism and the heart. Excessive and uncontrolled levels of the male hormone testosterone in the blood are correlated with a preponderance of such traits as overassertiveness, acquisitiveness and latent or overt aggression which characterize the cardiac personality, the type most prone to a sudden heart attack. Research has revealed the existence of specific receptor sites for this hormone in the myocardial tissue of the heart, and also in the walls of the larger blood vessels, and it is now felt that myocardial damage is induced by testosterone accumulation at these sites.

Heart attack is far more frequent in men than in women up to the age of the menopause, but beyond that the incidence in both sexes is similar. This strongly suggests that the female hormonal environment bestows a natural protection for the feminine heart whereas the male heart is endangered by excessive circulating levels of male hormones. In order to combat this, the masculine emotional and sexual metabolism has to be controlled. For this purpose we recommend the practice of meditation in siddhasana, where the lower heel

exerts pressure in the area of the prostate gland in the region of the perineal floor, and the upper heel is against the pubic bone, above the root of the generative organ.

This posture stabilizes the two lower psychic centres, mooladhara chakra and swadhisthana chakra, redirecting prana upwards towards the higher centres. Blockage of energy at these two centres is responsible for many health problems, and it also poses a barrier which has to be crossed in spiritual life. Mooladhara is the root centre in which an infinite source of pranic energy lies dormant and asleep, while swadhisthana is the centre responsible for the sexual and emotional metabolism in which our psychic energy most spontaneously manifests itself. When your emotional life does not extend beyond this plane, blood pressure and cardiac function remain unstable and our role and purpose in life remain ill-defined and unclear. There is an 'ache' in the heart which never knows the experience of constancy, beyond the fickle and transitory emotional feelings. But the higher experiences of the human heart and mind remain impenetrable unless the energy can be stabilized and led up into the higher centres of consciousness. In this sense, heart disease can be considered an evolutionary malady, where we suffer due to our bondage on the emotional plane, while our being aches to experience the constancy which arises when emotional attachments and aversions have been transcended.

Siddhasana is the posture which is recommended by Dr Christian Barnard, the heart transplant surgeon, to stabilize cardiac function in his patients. We have found that it proves most beneficial when learned during the late teens or early twenties, when the emotional and sexual drives and passions are likely to be unruly. At that time, siddhasana is found to rectify problems such as excessive nocturnal emission. If followed throughout life, it bestows protection from emotional ravages and stabilizes the passions, preventing later cardiac demise. The heart is protected when there is neither suppression of, nor anarchical expression of the emotional complexes. The key to preservation of the heart lies in controlled expres-

sion of our desires, instincts and drives and this is learned by following the precepts and practices of yoga throughout the different stages of life. By incorporating some asanas, pranayama and meditation into the daily program from an early age, the penalty of an overtaxed heart is avoided in middle age, and the emotions are channelled and expressed in a more creative way throughout life.

The central role of cholesterol should be understood. This fatty substance is the precursor from which the sex hormones are synthesized by the gonads and the adrenal glands. It is also required in the production of spermatozoa by the testes, along with other fatty protein complexes known as lipoproteins. These are needed to provide the structural requirements of the sperm, and also to provide the machinery which gives every sperm such an enormous energetic and motile capacity.

If the emotional and reproductive metabolism is unruly and uncontrolled, then the turnover of new sperm must occur at a rapid rate and an enormous amount of energy must be constantly provided to synthesize these replacement sperm. As a result a high level of cholesterol and protein is necessary, and this usually comes from dietary sources. This necessitates a high protein and fat diet, and demands that the physiological systems of digestion and cell synthesis operate at a very high rate, pushing up the metabolic rate and basal temperature in the process. Strain on the heart, the digestive organs such as the liver and the eliminatory organs such as kidneys, bowels and sweat glands is inevitable. Excessive wear and tear on the physiological systems is the end result and cardiac strain is one foremost effect.

Clearly, the emotional metabolism must be stabilized if the body is to be preserved. This can be attained by the twin approach of dietary regulation, where a decreased protein and fat intake is recommended, coupled with the growth of self-knowledge, self-expression and self-control, which is developed by following the royal path of yoga amidst all the various worldly confrontations and difficulties. These

measures are the best insulators against heart disease in the community as a whole.

In this regard, it is not enough to simply follow the precepts of a traditional religion. While this may provide a degree of mental and emotional security, it is actually suppressive and anti-evolutionary, for it does not allow us to come to terms with the emotional and instinctual factors of our nature directly. Traditional religions offer only precepts and concepts, but yoga offers psychophysiological practices which channel emotional energy correctly. The key to an enlightened emotional and sexual life, free of mental conflicts and physiological exhaustion, lies in the practice of yoga techniques in conjunction with our normal daily life experiences. Yoga does not require renunciation, but leads its practitioner to a fuller enjoyment of every aspect of life. The experiences of life should be enjoyed and understood if we are to progress and evolve. Blind adherence to dogma only blocks this evolutionary process, leading to mental illness and physical disease, but yoga offers the sublime way to fully appreciate life and complete our evolutionary journey.



15

The Truth about Tantra

Here Swami Satyananda clarifies the real purpose of tantra and outlines some of the methods used to attain it. Taped at Satyanandashram Barcelona, Spain, on 21 May 1980.

I am going to talk on a subject very much discussed in this part of the world today. Once yoga was in the limelight, but in the last few years a new philosophy and a new system of spiritual life has suddenly caught the attention of people in the West. This happened because people here are trying to find a way to discover the inner being.

There are numerous books on the market on this subject, which is known as tantra. Of course, everybody has his own opinion and definition of tantra, but this evening I want to make it clear to you that tantra is not a path of sexuality. Through the education I received from gurus and from what I have studied during the last forty-five years, I can only conclude that tantra is the path by which man can transcend his mundane consciousness. There is no doubt that tantra accepts everything and is not a philosophy of puritanism, but at the same time we must understand that it is a very important science affecting the entire range of human consciousness.

Let us now reflect upon the etymology of the word tantra. Tantra is a Sanskrit word embracing two ideas and two roots. *Tan* means expansion and *tra* means liberation. This indicates

that *tantra* is a science which deals with expansion and liberation. Expansion represents expansion of consciousness and liberation represents liberation of energy.

The human mind moves within a confined boundary and it has a limit of experience and cognition. However, it is possible to extend the area of human experience and take the consciousness beyond sensory limits. The normal mind depends on the senses for cognition and perception, and is therefore restricted by the capacity of the senses. This means our perceptions are conditioned; they are not absolute. In order to break the limitations and conditions, we need a method whereby the mind can be expanded beyond its normal frontiers. What are intuition, clairvoyance and premonition? What is inner experience? They are products of an expanded mind. If you are not able to expand your consciousness, you cannot have these experiences at any cost.

Now, let us consider the word liberation. Please do not take it in a religious sense; tantra does not mean emancipation or salvation. It means liberation of shakti. If you have studied physics, you will understand what is meant by liberation of energy from matter. Liberation is a very subtle process taking place in all matter. In tantra, by certain techniques you liberate the shakti from the material base at the root of spine. So now let us consider tantra as a system of techniques for the expansion of consciousness and, consequently, the liberation of shakti.

How do you expand the consciousness? Well, the young people tried to do it through drugs. Tantra is not against using chemicals, but the particular chemicals which can help to expand the consciousness are not known to the general public. They are contained in certain herbs, and knowledge of this branch of tantra is closely guarded by a few very responsible people. Therefore, I am not going to deal with this point at all.

The most important tool used in tantra is mantra. Throughout the tantric texts, mantra is said to be essential for the awakening of consciousness. *Mantra* is a sound or

vibration. Just as ripples and waves are created when you throw pebble into a lake, in the same way a mantra creates resonant waves in the realm of your consciousness. The resonance travels from the brain up and down the spinal column a number of times. In the course of time the resonating waves of the mantra alter the consciousness.

The science of mantra is a very special science which I will not be able to do full justice to in this brief lecture, but I want to stress that mantra is a very effective tool for evolving individual consciousness. And what is most significant is that the awakening, or the influence created by the mantra in the field of consciousness, is very mild and benign.

In addition to mantra, another powerful tool is described in tantra. That is called yantra. *Yantras* are particular geometrical figures which are a combination of a point, a line and a circle. They represent the deep rooted archetypes of an individual.

What happens to all of man's experiences? How do you define the totality of human consciousness? How do you define a house or a motor car? To define them well, you have to take their individual components into account. In the same way, consciousness must also be defined in terms of individual experiences. A car is the assembly of many parts and likewise, the totality of your experiences constitutes your consciousness.

These experiences are stored in geometrical forms represented by yantras. Every sound we hear, every form we see, every bit of knowledge that we gain and everything that the brain registers, directly or indirectly, is transported to the deeper realms of the mind, but not exactly in the same way that the senses receive them. They are transformed into particular symbols or certain languages, which are known as archetypes or *samskaras*.

If you take the seed of a flower and split it into two or four, can you see a plant? No. A plant is definitely there, but it is in a different form. Its existence is in a seed state; it is symbolic. When you plant the seed in earth and bring it in

contact with nature, in the course of time it will take the form of a flowering plant. It is the same with human experiences. Every experience is in seed form in your unconscious mind. Disease is there, knowledge is there, pain, suffering and happiness are there. There is no experience which is not there, but the peculiarity of nature is that they are in a symbolic state. Their explosion is the aim of the science of tantra.

It is easy to say, "Empty yourself", but if you empty your conscious mind, that is not emptying the consciousness. If you create a vacuum in your conscious mind, you are sacrificing the entire consciousness. You cannot empty yourself until all the symbols are expressed, and to do this you must practise concentration on yantra.

Now that we have discussed yantra, we must talk about concentration on mandala. *Mandala* is the pictorial concept. If you concentrate on a symbol or on me, you are concentrating on a mandala. It is very important for the mind to array itself in a particular form. Mandala crystallizes whereas yantra eliminates. The whole mind is emptied of samskaras through yantra and then is filled up with the consciousness of mandala. Therefore, mantra, yantra and mandala are the three tools that constitute the practical system of tantra.

In this short lecture I have only tried to present tantra in its philosophical context. This is certainly not all there is to tantra; it is a vast subject of which yoga is an offshoot. Yoga is not different from tantra. The practices of hatha yoga, kriya yoga, mantra yoga, etc. are clearly explained in tantra.

In our age, when the mind is dissipating, when man is suffering from infirmity of will, when he cannot accept puritanism at any cost, and when his mind is assailed by the storms of life, tantric techniques should be incorporated into our yogic practice. Thereby it may be possible for us to liberate the shakti.

16

Tantra for the West

It seems many Western people who are practising yoga think they can speed up their spiritual evolution by following the tantric path. Here, Swami Satyananda says they are already practising tantra, but in the name of yoga. He also gives the key instructions for success in sadhana and explains the indispensability of a guru. Taped at the Zinal Conference, Switzerland, in September 1980.

The West is already engaged in tantra. In your society you have all five elements of *vama marga* or left hand tantra. Sexual interaction is there, alcohol is there, meat is there, fish is there and porridge is there. The only thing you need to do is channel your purpose and prepare yourself through the path of yoga.

Yoga and tantra are not different. Yoga is preparation of the body, mind and emotions. You are already practising yoga postures, pranayama, the shatkarmas, bandhas, mudras, mantra and meditation. Some of you are also practising kriya yoga. All these are items of tantra. What people call yoga is tantra, and what they call tantra is yoga. Therefore, Westerners in particular and people from all parts of the world in general must continue to practise yoga. When you reach a certain point, your life as a householder will become sublime. Your life will be the same, but it will have a purpose and a meaning.

However, I must tell you one thing. For evolution in life, you must have a guru. Guru does not mean teacher or preceptor. It does not just mean a master. *Guru* is the dispeller

of darkness, the instrument of enlightenment, the one who awakens your inner light. If you discover such a guru for yourself, that will be your first great achievement in yoga, because to discover a guru for oneself is not so easy. You don't get gurus in the markets. Sometimes you find them so close to you, but you don't even know it. The destiny of man is to reach enlightenment, and those of you who have been practising yoga earnestly for a long period and who have been very persevering on the path should no longer delay this particular item of spiritual life.

In tantra, a guru is indispensable because someone has to explain things very clearly. The other day a man told me he had experienced some sort of psychic awakening and since then he has had a lot of problems in his body, mind and soul. He was unable to sleep, he had no desire to eat and he was suffering very much. I only told him a few things. I said, "You have a tempest within you, but it will definitely subside in the course of time. You need not worry and you need not fear, nothing will happen. But if you are fearful and anxious, then something can evolve from the fear and anxiety. Wait and suffer patiently." This is what a guru will tell the disciple at the time of spiritual crisis.

Those of you who have exposed yourselves to spiritual adventures should not expect an easy life or easy experiences. After all, adventure is adventure and every adventure involves some risk. If this present state of consciousness is to be moulded into a new pattern, if this mind is to die and another mind is to be resurrected, then that experience cannot be this experience; it has to be different.

Therefore, for the practices of tantra, there must be a guru by your side. There are three main types of gurus – yogic guru, tantric guru and jnana guru. The yogic guru teaches you the practices of yoga and the secrets of mind and consciousness. The jnana guru gives you knowledge about the world, the universe, life and incarnation, etc. He will explain to you the mysteries of the Gita, Bible, Ramayana, Torah, etc. The tantric guru is one who helps you to arouse the kundalini.

17

Establishing the Guru-Disciple Relationship

Here Swami Satyananda says that the relationship between a guru and disciple starts with mantra diksha. He talks about the different levels of devotion and his own experiences with guru. Taped on 5 September 1980 at the Transmission Seminar held in Chamarande, France.

When you decide to accept a mantra from a guru, you have accepted a relationship with him. First the guru-disciple relationship is within the spirit, then that spiritual relationship comes down to the emotional plane and then the mental plane. After that, you are able to understand it and you approach the guru, ask him for a mantra and he ordains it. Thereafter, the guru becomes immaterial and there is only one thing to be done. You have to practise the mantra day in and day out, so much so that in the course of time the mantra permeates your whole personality.

Devotion is a very spontaneous process. Just as you cannot be taught how to love and hate, you also cannot learn devotion and it cannot be forced. If you don't have devotion for your guru, nothing can be done; there are no vitamin pills to make your devotion strong. It has to be congenial, primitive, natural and spontaneous. Of course, the guru-disciple relationship has to become very, very intimate in the spiritual realm, but it is not possible all the time. There are degrees of devotion and everybody's devotion cannot be exactly the

same. Some disciples have lukewarm devotion while others have very feverish devotion.

Many guru-disciple relationships are merely customary, and of course the relationship will depend on how deep and how evolved the disciple is. I became a disciple three times. When I was with my parents, I came in contact with a lady saint. I was barely ten and she was at the prime of her youth, twenty-five years old. She gave me some spiritual instructions, so she became my guru. I appreciated her because she was so radiant and glowing.

Then, many years later, I left my home and wandered all over the country in search of the person who would be my guru. The first place I went to was an ashram in the western part of India. I went there because my sister had been studying kriya yoga there and she thought her guru could become my guru as well. The guru was a good man, aged about seventy. He did not speak very much, he was calm and very peaceful and he liked me. I also liked him, but I knew he was not my final destination.

After a few weeks, I left that ashram and again wandered in the wilderness. I had the name of a swami in Rishikesh so I went to meet him. He was a great Sanskrit master and he lived very close to Swami Sivananda's ashram. I told him I wanted to become a disciple and he pointed to Swami Sivananda's ashram and said, "Go to that ashram." So I went there in the early morning and met Swami Sivananda. He must have been fifty at that time, and when I looked at him, I knew I had arrived at the final point of my journey. And my assumption was correct.

I was with him for a very long time, but I never felt emotional; I never became hysterical and feverish. However, the influence of his love and my devotion to him were so great that I worked around the clock without allowing time for sleep and often missing meals. I was working to build the ashram like one possessed, but he never wanted it. Every time I finished a room and called him to bless it, he said, "You have created one more maya, one more subtle bondage." And in this way,

for years and years I worked for Swami Sivanandaji with a different type of devotion. It was not emotional devotion, nor was it intellectual or mental devotion. It was actual devotion; devotion in action.

What is the use of having devotion for your guru and constantly repeating his name while you are seated in the dirt? If his ashram is desolate and his garden has no flowers, is that devotion? A disciple's devotion should become actual. When my guru's birthday was being celebrated, all the disciples used to go to worship him, but I never did, I went to the kitchen and worked there instead. The other disciples used to ask me, "Hey, why don't you show any devotion for Swamiji?" I used to say, "Your devotion is emotional, my devotion is actual."

Now, you must remember that there are different types of guru-disciple relationships. In tantra, the guru-disciple relationship is complete. All kinds of relationships can be practised between one guru and one disciple in the tantric framework. However, if you are a householder, this is not possible. Someone who is a husband, a wife, a son or a daughter has social commitments and emotional obligations. Therefore, they must maintain a balance between their obligations to their family and their obligations to their guru.

So, everyone's relationship with the guru must be practical and customary. If you are a householder, go to your guru, ask for a mantra, accept it and wish him 'Hari Om'. Then go back to your home and practise your mantra. Each time you sit down to practise, remember your guru, and at the end of your practice, remember him again. That should be the extent of your relationship with the guru.

18

Every Guru is a Light

In an interview with the 'New Age' magazine of Helsinki, Finland, Swami Satyananda was asked to give advice to sincere seekers so they would not be misguided or taken advantage of by 'fraud gurus'. Sri Swamiji says that no guru should be considered false or condemned, as each has a positive contribution to make no matter how small or insignificant it may seem. Recorded on 27 July 1981.

I believe everyone is a seeker and should be free to find his own path and his own guru. I don't believe that there are good and bad gurus, in the same way, there are no good and bad husbands or good and bad wives. When two individuals are not able to compromise with each other, how can you say which one is bad and which one is good?

There is so much talk about certain gurus being frauds, destroying people's minds, ruining their lives. If you cannot manage with your guru, it is your problem. There are no good gurus, no bad gurus, no saints and no charlatans. Even those people who wear the robe of guru in order to make a profit become responsible in due course. I have seen this happen many times.

The thing that all spiritually minded people should strictly and adamantly avoid is creating confusion in the minds of the people: "This guru is great, that guru is nothing at all." Differences and gradations are always there in the systems of teaching and also in the case of gurus. At the same time,

lapses can also occur in the lives of gurus, but that does not mean I should idolize my guru and condemn yours, either directly or indirectly. We have only to see one thing: the positive contribution of a person in the life of a seeker. Even if you guide one or two hundred people, that is enough.

There is a small candle and there is a big light. You cannot compare them. The candle is not useless and the light does not illuminate everything. The candle works well in places where there is no light. So gurus like us are the little candles on the dark footpath of human evolution, and we try to shed some light on a certain destination in the distance. Beyond that there is another candle and beyond that another. So in the name of our own guru or our own fame, it is not good to blow out the lights of others. That is what we must all remember at this particular point of the century.

This is what I have been telling every swami and each and every disciple lately, "Don't condemn anyone. If you cannot speak well of him, just keep quiet." I am saying this in the interest of humanity. Otherwise there will be so many little fishes, so many sects, and so much strife, with everyone bellowing, beating, kicking and wailing. No, we must have a non-violent method by which we can collect the positive contributions of everybody for humanity. One person is teaching mantra, another is teaching meditation, a third is teaching pranayama, a fourth kriya, a fifth tantra. One day we will all come together with our different practices to a church of a different face.

19

Moving in the Spirit of the Guru

Swami Satyananda speaks on the sublime and intimate relationship which exists between the guru and the disciple who is able to surrender to him completely. Recorded on 2 April 1981 at the 'Tantra and Meditation' seminar held in Milano, Italy.

In spiritual life there is a very important relationship that exists between guru and disciple. Guru is not merely a teacher. In yoga, guru is the master, the one who is able to give knowledge and dispel the inner darkness. Therefore, guru should not be interpreted as a professor or teacher. There are two channels of acquiring knowledge: one is through the intellect and the other is through enlightenment. A professor or teacher can give intellectual knowledge, but he cannot give enlightenment.

The guru is able to give both intellectual and intuitive knowledge to his disciples. In English, the word disciple means a person who follows a certain discipline, but in yoga, he is known as *chela* or *shishya*, meaning 'one who is eager to learn'. If you come to the guru to learn, you are a *chela* or *shishya*.

Even as a guru is able to give intellectual knowledge and enlightenment, in the same way, a *chela* should be able to learn intellectually as well as assimilate enlightenment. The most important point to remember here is that not everybody is a *chela*. Most people want to have intellectual knowledge only, they do not understand enlightenment. Also their con-

sciousness and their spirit may not be ready for the experience of enlightenment.

The relationship between guru and chela is like the relationship between an electrical cable and light. Guru is the energy or the spiritual shakti, and chela is the revealer of that shakti. Therefore, every chela must develop his spirit and his consciousness. Then when the spirit and consciousness become deep, the disciple realizes himself. The spirit unfolds within him, and there is enlightenment.

Guru and disciple are essentially one and not two. The consciousness of the disciple is always plugged into the guru. This is called devotion or *bhakti*. On that plane they are one and totally united. By constant spiritual practice, purity is attained, the dross of the mind is removed, and then the disciple can realize his guru within himself.

For a disciple, the guru exists outside as well as inside. The external guru is one aspect of his devotion and the inner guru is another aspect of his realization. When he meditates on his guru, he tries to communicate with his inner guru. Therefore, the guru is the most important aspect in spiritual life. But it should be remembered that the disciple has to belong to a higher category. The higher the disciple's spirit, the quicker will be his enlightenment.

Even as pure water in a pond can reflect the moon in the sky, in the same way, the purity of the disciple's heart can reflect the glory of his guru. There are three important types of deeper relationships. The highest relationship is between man and God. The empirical relationship is between child and parent, brother and sister, man and woman, but the relationship with the guru includes them all. It is at once empirical and transcendental. At one level they move as two individuals, one knows and the other does not, but at a higher level they move as one.

The glory of the guru and the greatness of the disciple is the first important point in the practice of yoga as well as tantra. The attitude and behaviour of the disciple and the guru are very special. It is an attitude of complete acceptance

and an attempt at getting closer and closer to each other. The arrogance of the disciple and the egoism of the guru will not bring them closer. The disciple is most important for a guru and the guru is equally important for a disciple.

When you start the practice of yoga and tantra, you begin to become a chela. It is true that in the beginning you learn yoga and tantra from books and by hearing about them from others, but at a certain point in your practice, there has to be some sort of interaction between you and your guru.

When you begin your journey in spiritual life you are always full of inspiration and enthusiasm because you begin your journey on the external plane where you live. But when you move further, you come to a land where you have never been. Here there is a feeling of total loneliness, and the experiences are baffling. The visions and the knowledge are so utterly astounding that you cannot even understand what you are seeing.

At that point, when a great transformation is taking place in the realm of the mind and experience, to whom are you going to ask, "What is this?" When you ask different people, you get different answers and that creates a lot of confusion in your psyche. The persons whom you ask don't really know you and you don't know them. Therefore, they cannot properly interpret your experiences. Hence you need a guru with whom you are intimate and who should be intimate with you. You belong to him and he belongs to you. 'You' means the body, mind, emotions and spirit. All of you belongs to him.

It is also most important that the guru be a living guru. Sometimes, due to our personal arrogance, we feel averse to having a living guru. In many people there is a particular psychological behaviour pattern which we call ego or individuality. On account of this we do not want to surrender, but still we live in a world of paradox. We surrender to the senses, to the worldly enjoyments, but when the moment comes to surrender before the guru, our individuality comes up.

I remember a man who was very attached to a woman. He spent a lot of money on her. He neglected his children and displeased his wife for her. Once he met me on a train,

and I began to talk to him about guru. He said, "But I cannot renounce my individuality. I am me." I knew all about that man, so I told him, "When it comes to guru, you have an individuality; but in relation to that woman, have you any?"

This is the paradox with all of us. When we are talking about the guru, we are very afraid of losing ourselves, but we are not afraid of losing ourselves in this wilderness of life. I think there are two important moments of surrender in human life. We surrender ourselves to the lower instincts of life, to our temptations and mental whims. That is one type of surrender which most people make. The other point of surrender is to the guru. The outcome of the first surrender is pain, agony and frustration. The result of the second type of surrender is *ananda*, bliss. You begin to feel that you are no longer alone. There is someone who will love you, not on a temporary basis, but for all time. You begin to feel that he and you are one.

This realization of unity is the consequence of surrender of disciple to guru. Therefore, how should a chela behave? In my opinion there is only one way a chela must behave. He must live, move and think in the spirit of the guru. You know how a car moves. Whenever you turn the steering wheel to the right, the car goes to the right. If you turn it to the left, the car goes to the left. Supposing you turn the steering wheel to the right and the car moves to the left, what will you do? You will send the car to a mechanic because there is something wrong with it. Therefore, when the disciple moves with the spirit of guru, he is going all right, but if he moves against the spirit of the guru, then he needs some repair work. Therefore, it is necessary to have a guru and to follow him.

20

Instructions to the Disciple

Swami Satyananda tells the teenage sannyasis how to develop inner awareness of guru. Recorded in a small satsang at Bihar School of Yoga, Munger, on 22 April 1981.

There is a state or experience, a little beyond the mind, in which you can see a person or an object that you love very much. Then you can materialize it on your inner plane of awareness as clear as reality. Of course, this only happens when your consciousness is raised. The image then appears and becomes clear. In this elevated state you can see the guru just as if you are sitting in front of him and he is talking to you. So try to develop this by practising a little every day, for half an hour to an hour.

There are two states of consciousness. In one state you know that you are witnessing everything, but in the other state you do not know. Afterwards, when you come out there is a little imbalance, but it passes shortly if you are under the guru's direction. However, if you are not under the guidance of the guru and the imbalance continues, it is possible to go crazy. That is why sadhana should never be done without the instruction of the guru, never; not even kunjla and neti should be done. The disciple must completely resign himself to the guru. Then, at the proper time, the guru will give him sadhana. I could not tell you these things before because a certain maturity had to be reached.

If your relationship with guru is very simple, you can have any relationship with him. You not only have a guru, but a parent, child, friend, lover. Of course, he is a man and you are a woman, but the guru's relationship with all disciples is very clear. Whatever he does is only to impress their consciousness. Guru does not have disciples for any other purpose, but most disciples do not understand. So what happens is that emotional imbalance often develops. Sometimes you think, "Swamiji loves me too much," and at other times, "Oh, now he does not love me at all." But that is a mistake. The guru never loves anyone. Whatever he does is solely to change the quality of the mind.

You have seen how adding sugar changes the quality of milk. If you mix tea with boiling water, you change the quality of the water. In the same way, once the guru gets into your mind he changes the whole quality and structure. It is a very simple process; there are so many ways in which he can do it: by mantra, sadhana, lectures, singing, thinking. When the guru comes into your mind, then the sadhana has to begin. But never think that the guru is attached or loves anyone in any personal way.

At a certain point, the disciple should be able to develop his own awareness; then he does not need the guru physically at all. There is no difference between that state of awareness and physical contact. It is exactly the same. Maybe even that state of awareness is more tangible than this one. If you can visualize or feel me in moments of solitude, that is far more fulfilling and satisfying than communicating with this physical form. You can try.

However, first of all you must know that I am your guru and you are to be controlled by me at every moment. That is what guru means. Sometimes I may get angry and abuse you, kick you, or put you out of the gate. All these things must be accepted too. The disciple is one who is always controlled by his guru. Otherwise, even though many disciples work very hard in spiritual life and develop some experience, afterwards they still go back to normal. Because they have no guru they

go on doing what they like, always sitting and talking about useless things. If I ask you not to sleep, to keep quiet, not to argue with me, you must obey me without thinking or hesitation. With guru, the sadhaka disciple should have no personality; only then can he be helped.

So, you have all the elements with you. Work hard. Once in a month, once in a week, once in a day, practise this. Develop the inner awareness. Have communion with your guru, inner communion. That is more tangible, satisfying, real and full of potential than the outer one. You will know it after practising a few times. It is not unreal. Perhaps this seems real and that unreal, but it is only because that is a higher awareness.

You know how the awareness is projected. You can see it in moments of extreme fear, passion or bluff; this is a manifestation of consciousness. But when you practise it, there is one thing which you must be aware of. You should not do it unless you know that whatever I say to you is final, no argument. Only after this can you practise it. Otherwise, if manifestation of consciousness takes place even momentarily, it becomes very difficult to control. You might say, "I am going to Australia," and if I say, "No, don't go," you will not listen.

Therefore, first of all, you must establish a relationship in such a way that whatever I say is final. There is no second word on it, no argument, analysis, judgement or afterthought. When I say no, it is finished. Otherwise, what will happen when the consciousness manifests? All sorts of thoughts come to the mind and people get uprooted. So, if you say, "I am going to Australia," and I say, "Wait, not now," then you should say, "Okay, Swamiji said no, so I will not go." What guru says, the disciple has to follow quietly, right or wrong. Until this relationship is established, the disciple should not attempt higher sadhana, otherwise he may be misguided after that experience.

In the normal affairs of life, you have your experience and I have mine, but the relationship between guru and disciple is always spiritual, even if you are involved with accounts or money. Therefore, everywhere you go this awareness has to be

there. It does not matter if you make certain mistakes in your department because of what I have told you to do. After all, I have told you to do it. If you are working in the kitchen and I say, “Keep the wheat outside,” and then ten bags of wheat are destroyed, it does not matter. It may be a material loss, but it is a spiritual gain because you obeyed the guru.

A guru does not exploit the disciple. If the disciple has great devotion, the guru can never exploit him. Only if the disciple is selfish can the guru exploit him. In many books it is written that the guru exploits the disciples, but it is my experience that the guru can never exploit the unselfish disciple. Guru can only exploit a selfish disciple. An unselfish disciple, a sadhaka, never loses anything, no matter what the guru asks of him, because he goes on developing his higher consciousness.



21

Learning through Transmission

Swami Satyananda discusses the different methods of spiritual teaching and explains how guru and disciple can communicate with each other through the process of transmission. Recorded on his arrival at Satyananda Ashram Mangrove Mountain, Australia, in November 1980.

Nowadays, people from all walks of life have a better knowledge of yoga than ever before because they have been attending yoga classes for many years. This method of learning in a class situation is called tuition, and it is the most prevalent way of imparting knowledge to students. History, geography, mathematics, philosophy, science and yoga are all taught in formal classes, where a teacher stands up in front and speaks while the students remain seated and listen. The teacher speaks from an intellectual point of view, repeating what he has learned from books and tutors. He does not speak from his spirit or his personal experience.

In ancient India, there was another concept of learning, known as transmission, whereby the student did not depend on the external aid of the senses. This process was completely internal. In tantra, transmission was the traditional method used to pass down the teachings from guru to disciple. In this way a direct link was maintained between the original preceptor and the disciple receiving his knowledge perhaps hundreds or even thousands of years later.

The main difference between these two systems is that one is intellectual while the other is intuitive. One is based on concepts gained outside from study, logic and experience. The other is a form of inner attunement, resulting from a highly charged energy spark entering one of the psychic centres of the brain.

Today, in spite of years and years of yoga training, many people have hardly grown spiritually. Their greed, pride, prejudice, fears and complexes remain the same. This is because they have been only learning yoga through an intellectual process and have not been able to imbibe it spiritually. Consequently, they have not yet transcended the weaknesses of life or managed to stabilize the state of happiness.

When a disciple or aspirant learns yoga through transmission, he comes to live in his guru's ashram. He does not attend any classes, but just by living in a yogic atmosphere, he learns yoga in spirit. Through the process of living with the guru, a state of communion develops and the disciple's consciousness expands inwardly, enabling him to imbibe the knowledge of his guru.

Living with the guru does not mean living in his room. If you live with a guru, it means you live with him spiritually. When I lived in Rishikesh with my guru, I seldom met him, but still every moment I was living for him and with him. Rishikesh ashram covers a wide area and the room where I stayed was so far away from where my guru dwelt that if I had to walk there twice a day, I would be exhausted. But from dawn to dusk, in every action I performed, I felt my guru was there. You know how, if you love someone, he lives in you and you live in him, well, this is the situation between guru and disciple.

So you see, there are two ways of imparting knowledge. You have experienced learning yoga by means of tuition. Now, however, you should stop trying to learn yoga intellectually and start imbibing it spiritually. To explain this process I will give you an example. From an electrical powerhouse, the electricity travels to a transforming station. From the trans-

forming station it travels to different electrical poles and into your homes. Now your homes are connected with electricity, and it is entirely up to you whether you switch on the power or not.

Similarly, in spiritual life, the power line is connected, the switch is there, but it is up to the disciple whether he makes use of it or not. When people come to the Munger ashram to learn yoga, I generally meet them occasionally, either once a day or once a week. But mostly they feel that as a guru I am neglecting them. Just because I do not see them and speak with them every ten minutes, they think I'm not teaching them. But after many years of teaching yoga through formal classes, I now feel that physical contact is not the final means of communication. The guru and disciple must talk to each other in different realms, through the method of transmission.

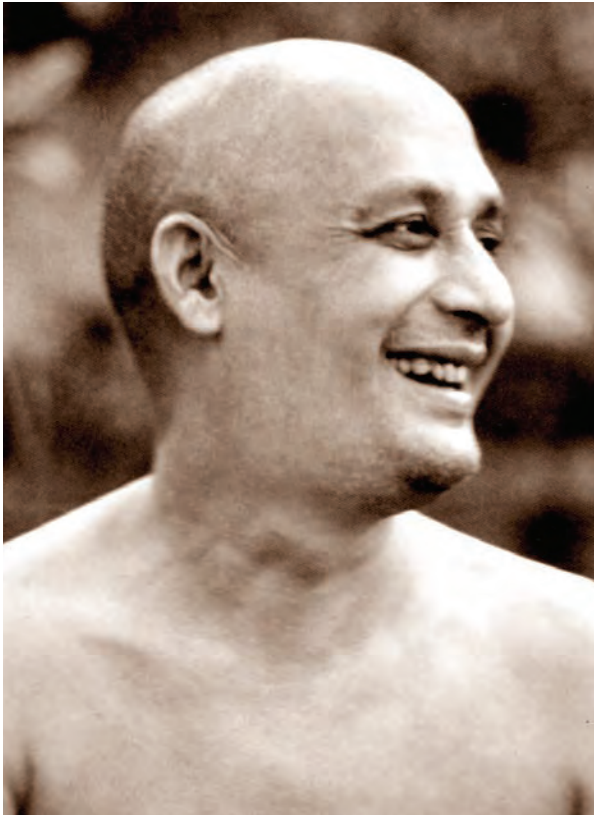
Last September, at the request of the European Union of National Federations of Yoga, I stayed at Chamarande just out of Paris, at the site where they are developing a new yoga university. During the week I spent there, we experimented with transmission. Then, when I went to Zinal to conduct a seminar on tantra, we also experimented with transmission. Certain swamis were the poles for transmission. They took classes, gave lectures and held satsangs, and I was hardly ever there. I stayed alone in my room in hibernation.

When the mind becomes quiet, the sensory channels are plugged, and the ego is dissolved for some time, then the power of the soul or spirit becomes very, very strong. It knows no geographical barriers, no psycho-emotional distances, and man can meet with man and hearts can talk to hearts.

In one of the Upanishads it is said that the *atman* or spirit is homogeneous silence. How do you experience this? Not by the sensory or psycho-emotional communications, but by tuning yourself into silence. This is what you must all do to experience the process of transmission. You don't have to become rigid at all, and you don't have to put on that serious 'Sunday face'. Be as bright and as natural as you are. The

barrier is not in spirit, because spirit is one. The barrier is in man's mind because he has individualized it. Just as you have attained a personal home, wife, child, name and religion, in the same way, you have developed the concept of personal mind. Once you surrender this personal mind, then the mind becomes homogeneous and is called the cosmic mind.

So try to put aside your personal mind and be as relaxed as possible. This can be done through satsang, kirtan and spiritual discourses and by trying to simplify your mind, habits and lifestyle. I will try to be with you all the time, not physically of course, but spiritually.



22

Plants and Trees

Swami Satyananda comments on the inner life of plants and their honorary membership in the Hindu family. Taped on 8 September 1980 at the Zinal Conference in Switzerland.

Plants, animals and everything existing in this world are all a part of evolution. They are not just inert matter; they are sensitive beings. We may not be able to see their agonies or understand when they smile, but definitely they do. When a person approaches them, they understand and immediately shrink away or become glad. The secretions in their systems are highly reactive and are altered either positively or negatively in response to different kinds of people.

Trees and plants are greatly affected by the actions performed near them. They have a highly developed system of vision and recording. You may have killed someone and think that no one has seen, but the trees have witnessed it and they know all about it. They have memory membranes, and if you could develop plant interpreters and put them into the trees, they would tell us everything that has taken place nearby within the last week.

In India, many plants and trees are considered to be sacred, and a lot has been said about this in the Hindu religion. Hindus regard trees and plants as you would your brother or sister. Relating to this, there is an interesting custom which is still practised today in many Hindu families. When a Hindu

girl is about to be married, her astrological chart is analyzed to see whether she is destined to become a widow early in life. If so, this is what they do. Before the actual wedding ceremony takes place, the girl is taken to a particular tree which is regarded as the devata, and is given in marriage to that tree. Thus, even if her husband dies, the girl is never widowed because of her first marriage to the tree devata. This is why we consider trees to be important members of the human family.



23

The Technological Culture

This controversial talk was given by Swami Satyananda during the Transmission Seminar he conducted at Chamarande (Essone), France in September 1980.

The technological culture is a very difficult subject to approach because it has to be dealt with very bluntly. Wherever it has gone, it has brought pollution, not only environmental pollution, but mental, emotional, social and political pollution as well. Therefore, what we have to do now is to check the growth of this culture. No culture should go unchecked or unabated, whether it is technological, spiritual or communistic. The mistake that we in the West have made is that we have not resisted it; we have succumbed to it whereas the Chinese, Indians and Africans have not made this mistake. They have seen both sides of the technological culture and they have resisted.

Now, in the twentieth century, after two hundred years of industrial revolution in Europe, people are finally beginning to think about pollution, but in India we have been aware of it long before technology became established. We knew that industrialization could produce wastes, disharmonize the rural culture and make man completely sick. The people of Europe are only coming to realize this now, and it is too late.

Now everyone will have to work very hard to efface and erase the corrupt influence of this technological civilization. It is not that everything about technology is bad. Technology has given us time and leisure, but how do we use them? The people in China, Africa and India have to work hard physically; they don't have modern facilities, but they do have very intimate interactions with each other. Here in Paris and in other big cities like Amsterdam, London, Moscow, New York, Tokyo or Calcutta, there is no interaction between human beings; we do not even know who lives on the next floor. This is why we have developed such an attitude of inner cruelty towards nature and other forms of life.

If our ancestors or forefathers have made mistakes, we have to accept them. Wherever they went they massacred and created bloodshed. You know the story of poor South America. The innocent girls of the Incas were simply massacred just for the sake of a kilogram of gold!

Humanity has to understand that society, politics, language and colour are geographical factors. The African people are brown or black and the Europeans are white. It is not because they are special people, it is because of geographical factors. In the same way, whether one is black or white is not God's creation, it is nature's circumstances. If I had been born in Denmark, I would be very white and if you had been born an African, you would definitely have curly black hair.

In the Middle East it is very hot, so the people living there cover their bodies from top to toe. In India it is very sunny and warm, so we wear loose clothing. In the Middle East there is no water and no fuel for fires, so when a person dies, his body is buried. In India there is sufficient fuel for fire and there is water, so dead bodies are burned and the remains are placed in sacred rivers. In this way, the social customs, religious rules and ethical constitutions develop according to the fibre of man's nature.

The morality of the people is dependent on the culture which they develop through natural processes. Under what circumstances has the Western culture developed? Under

what skies are we developing a civilization here? You know very well. It is not an outcome of the natural processes; it is an artificial, processed culture. Overnight there are high-rise buildings with over a hundred storeys, shopping centres occupying five square miles, cinema centres showing twenty films simultaneously. Most people live a life of pleasure-seeking in a jungle of cement.

Those people who live in natural situations see trees growing; every morning and evening they hear birds singing. They see the sunrise and sunset and the twinkling of stars at night. They know all about mosquitoes, scorpions, snakes, floods, cold and heat. The natural situation in which they live creates an ethical and moral fibre in their lives.

Ethics and morality are not created in parliaments or by social thinkers, nor are they religious conclusions. Ethics and morality develop automatically in accordance with the relationships people have with their natural surroundings. Any culture which has the power to exist should have enough discrimination to measure things on the scale of right and wrong.

A new culture is developing in the West, with the fibre of the modern technological climate rather than the fibre of nature. But we definitely have one hope, and that is to develop the elements of resistance. We have become very weak, but we do not know it. It is true that our children are well educated; they can drive motor cars and fly planes, but if a cruel political culture happens to come, can we resist? Resistance depends on the ethical and moral fibre of the people.

In order to develop the moral and ethical fibre, it is important that something be done. In India we discuss these things very much because we can see the West from a distance. We are the spectators and onlookers. We are aware of what can happen to a race or a nation because we have suffered the accidents of history. There have been very few countries in the world which have faced as many historical accidents as we have in India. We know how our women were trapped and how our children were shot. We know how we lived through

it, and that is the training of mental and moral strength that has to be given to the children.

Definitely, the children who just know how to look at television cannot resist a cruel political onslaught. All those tender boys and girls who dance in the nightclubs cannot protect the culture and the nation, and that is why yoga has come here.



24

Poverty in India

Westerners who have visited India are struck by the poverty and appalled by the sight of people dying of starvation in the streets. At the Transmission Seminar held in Chamarande, France, in September 1980, Swami Satyananda was asked to comment on this point.

The situation which exists in India is not altogether different from what you have in your own countries. There is poverty in every part of the world, unemployment is soaring in every nation and there is just as much sickness and disease in the West as there is in India. And you know, India is not the only country where people die! All these manifestations are universal, but the difference is that the affluent countries have been able to conceal all this by organizing slums behind the scenes, but the poorer countries can't afford to do this.

In most countries there are millions of people living on social security. Stop it and see what happens. In every city there are thousands of people living in retirement villages and old people's homes. Turn them out and see where they go. Mental illness is so widespread nowadays that in every city there are thousands of people locked behind bars in mental hospitals. Close down these institutions and see what happens. The picture will not be much different from India.

Actually, India has not always been poverty stricken; this is a fairly recent condition which has only developed in the last seventy or ninety years. If you read the early accounts of

the Chinese travellers who came to India, or the voyages of Marco Polo and others, you'll be surprised to read that they used to say 'India, the golden bird'. Then, for more than ten centuries, the Persians, Greeks and Arabs invaded India just for gold.

What happened in India is that during the last ninety years, cottage industries have declined and whole industries have been destroyed. You see, we Indians have never believed in big business. We always preferred that one person produced the cloth, another manufactured the shoes and someone else managed the village. Everybody worked only towards meeting the requirements of the village; nothing was for marketing.

In 1942 or 1943 a great famine occurred in Bengal and took the lives of millions of people. Do you know what caused that famine? The government opened two big textile mills and that put thousands of people out of work. The same thing happened in many other industries when production was increased to meet export quotas. Having experienced this great tragedy, Mahatma Gandhi and many other thinkers did not believe technology was a good thing for India.

So the poverty which you see in India today is a result of the technological culture which was imported from the modern countries of the West. However, you won't find beggars and people dying of starvation in the villages. They can only be found in the big cities like Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Delhi, Ahmedabad and Benares. In the villages you generally only find swamis and sadhus begging and they are given alms. The widows and old people are taken care of and the handicapped and retarded children are loved and sheltered by their families.

This poverty and starvation came to us as a great surprise. Suddenly there were all these people having to beg, and we did not know what to do with them. We gave them money, but we knew this was not the solution. We also did not want to put such people in poor people's homes, because we knew this would mark the beginning of a bad tradition. We want people to earn for themselves and fulfil their own needs. But

where is the work? The big factories are finishing it off. Our need at the moment is to revive the cottage industries, the small scale and village industries.

Remember, history can change at any time. Who could believe that this 'golden bird' could have beggars? And who could believe that this country, which had so much surplus food that we could perform yajnas and offer rice, ghee, fruit, etc. to the sacred fires, would one day have no food? Every nation has a destiny and the cycle of events turns and turns. Therefore, no nation should become arrogant.



25

Tapasya

Here Swami Satyananda discusses austerity, not as a hardship but as a form of yogic treatment. Taped at Satyanandashram Barcelona, Spain, in May 1980.

The word *tapasya* is often translated as austerity, but etymologically, *tapas* means a process of purification through which you make yourself more seasoned, more mature. The body of man is very weak and his mind is even weaker. When you have a weak mind and body, how can you complete your pilgrimage of life? When your motor car is not working properly, then it has to be sent to a mechanic. In exactly the same way, the body and mind have to be overhauled, and that process is known as tapasya.

Many people think that tapas refers to the austere life of a puritan. Well, it is not a matter of logic or dispute. When your house is collapsing, either you repair it or move out. Now, this body is composed of different organs, processes and laws. If your digestive system is weak, can eating less be considered an austerity? No. In the same way, if you are indulging in sensual life and have too many attachments, which are affecting the mind, heart and body, are you going to add more enjoyments, more attachments, or minimize them? When the body is sick, you have to maintain certain restrictions, prohibitions and abstentions. That is not austerity; it is a method of treatment whereby you can purify and free yourself of the dirt, patterns and complexes that cause pain and suffering in your life.

Tapasya is threefold. The highest form is *sattwic tapas*, which is intended to purify the mind and body for self-realization. Sattwic tapas has a spiritual purpose, and if you want to follow it, then you have to practise meditation. In meditation, when your mind is giving you a lot of trouble, then you must practise pranayama. The breath and mind are interconnected and therefore pranayama is a very powerful method of controlling the mind.

Pranayama is an important form of tapasya. When you practise pranayama, yogic heat is created. This heat or fire of yoga helps in the awakening of kundalini. When the mind is possessed by the powerful force of kundalini, it becomes totally stable. This is sattwic tapas, a process whereby you generate physical heat in your body. This heat is vitally important for meditation, but if you practise pranayama without preparation, it will not fulfil this purpose.

Of course, everybody can practise pranayama, but for awakening kundalini you need to make a lot of preparations. You will have to practise asanas, bandhas and mudras, otherwise you will have difficulty in pranayama. The heat which is generated cannot be directed to the proper centres. Therefore, jalandhara bandha, uddiyana bandha and moola bandha are practised to lock in the prana from all sides. In order to practise these bandhas correctly, the practise of asanas is very important. Therefore, we can say that all of hatha yoga is sattwic tapas.

Rajasic tapas is practised by continuous fasting and exposing the body to the elements of heat and cold in order to dissipate desires and attachments. This type of tapas usually causes repression, therefore it requires understanding. Most people who practise this type of tapas, which can rightfully be called austerity, do not have a clear purpose and often do not even know why they are fasting. In this case, the benefits are minimal.

The third type of austerity is called as *tamasic tapas*. This is practised by forcing the body, which thereby affects the mind. For example, in India there are people called fakirs who place

their body in a certain position and remain like that without moving for years on end.

Conclusively, those people who want to realize higher consciousness should practise sattwic tapas, but at the same time it is important to avoid excesses in life. Excess makes the senses weak, when you should be maintaining a balance. Many people completely dedicate themselves to sensual life, thinking that even in a luxurious situation, self-realization can be obtained. Those who live in luxury weaken their bodies and minds because they are dependent upon sense objects.

Through tapasya, you are trying to set in motion a process of metabolism through which all the habits that create weakness and obstruct the awakening of willpower can be eliminated. You must know what your necessities are. Your life has to be made simpler. You have to make a choice, that's all. You can't have your cake and eat it too. Either you want samadhi or you want sensual life. You may be able to continue with both for a while, but there comes a time when you have to make a departure from sensual life.

That is why tantra is practised. Its purpose is not to indulge in drinking, meat-eating or sexual life, but to transcend your addictions. This is an important aspect of spiritual life. Mind is a very good advocate; it always argues for the senses. But in fact, even if you let your senses run riot, that doesn't bring you happiness. So it doesn't matter what the mind says. Go on with your tapas.

26

Ashram Culture

Swami Satyananda describes ashram life and speaks about the importance of karma yoga. A compilation from talks given in Chamarande, France, and Zinal, Switzerland, in September 1980 and at Satyananda Ashram Mangrove Mountain, Australia, in November 1980.

The ashram culture is a very old tradition. We know about the ashrams in India and ancient Greece and the Essene communities of Palestine. In the Atlantis civilization there are also references to ashram life.

The ashram is a place where people come from every walk of life and live for some time without having any involvement or attachment. There is no caste, colour or sex barrier. In the olden days, kings and ordinary farmers lived together in the ashrams. Ashram life is designed in such a way that everybody automatically participates in all functions, and there is cooperation, coordination and harmony.

The food is different to what we take in our ordinary day-to-day life. That helps people to purify their physical bodies. All day in the ashram, the aspirants are exposed to physical work, which is very important for spiritual evolution. Intellectual work is a barrier to spiritual life, but physical work relaxes tensions, minimizes passions and excitements, and at the same time balances the metabolic processes. Sometimes we do so much physical work in the ashram that purification of

the body takes place spontaneously even without the practice of hatha yoga.

Nowadays, the ashram is often misinterpreted as being another type of clinic, therapy centre or educational institution, but it is none of these. Actually, the word 'ashram' is derived from the Sanskrit root *shram*, which means hard work. So an ashram is a place where you have to work hard. That is why Lord Buddha used to call his disciples shramaneras. *Shraman* means one who labours. You have to work hard on the external, physical plane to transform the excess energy of your mind. If you do not provide this energy with some type of constructive outlet, it can easily become very destructive.

There is a short story which is often told in India to illustrate this. Once there was a magician who longed to have some special powers in order to accomplish his work. So he went to his guru and told him about his desire. The guru thought about this for some time, and then he gave the magician a special mantra whereby he could invoke a spirit from the nether regions. As soon as the magician returned to his home, he uttered the mantra and a demon appeared before him.

"Now sir," said the demon, "since you are my master, please give me some work."

"Alright, build me an ashram," ordered the magician.

The ashram was instantly erected because the demon possessed supernatural powers.

"Finished," said the demon. "What next?"

"Build a road right up to the front gate," replied the magician.

"Done." said the demon. "What shall I do now?"

"Make a garden with trellises all around," commanded the magician, and in a trice that too was completed.

In this way, the demon went on producing until the magician ran out of ideas, so when the demon demanded further tasks, the magician could think of nothing more to give him. At this point, the demon became infuriated.

"Unless you give me work right away," he shouted, "I will kill you."

The poor magician was terrified and ran to his guru for help.

“Don’t worry,” said the guru, “I will show you how to manage him. What you have to do is erect a smooth, wooden pole about thirty feet high. Then tell the demon to climb to the top, pour oil all over the pole and climb down. As soon as he reaches the bottom he must climb back up again.”

So the magician went home and relayed his guru’s instructions to the demon, who immediately took up the work and began climbing the pole. Each time he reached the top, he poured more oil down until the whole pole became so slippery that he was only able to climb it with utmost difficulty. In this way the magician kept the demon totally engaged so that he could utilize him when necessary, and the rest of the time he no longer posed any problem.

This parable relates to our own demon, the mind, and the physical labour we do in the ashram in order to pacify and control it. Otherwise the mind becomes negative and poses a threat to us, just as the demon in the story did before the magician found the solution.

So, in ashram life, the first function of karma yoga is to control the negative aspect of the mind. Otherwise, the energy dissipates itself in all kinds of diversions – attractive and destructive sensual passions, fantasies, broken and unsteady thinking.

The second function of karma yoga is to deal with the inner life. In a garden you dig the earth, sow the seeds, add manure, remove the weeds and watch over what you have created by nightly vigil. This is simply a reflection of what you are doing internally. Within the mind there is a wild uncultivated garden which grows all kinds of bushes and weeds. It doesn’t allow flowers, fruits or any beautiful things to grow. It contains all sorts of thorny bushes and you have to clear them out.

What happens when you sow good seeds, good samskaras and karmas in this garden? The little animals which live in the forest come out at night and undo all that you have done during the day. What are these animals that come during

the night? The first is desire, the second frustration and the third attraction to sensual life. That is why it is said in the Upanishads, “Do not sleep by night.” Your inner life, your inner garden has to be carefully tended and watched over in exactly the same way as we take care of the garden here in the ashram.

The ashram is a symbol, an external expression of what should be happening in everybody’s minds and hearts. Ashram life is designed in such a way that it reminds you of illumination every moment you are there. In an ashram you do not meditate the whole day, you work instead. You see the glory of divinity while you graze the cows; work as a carpenter; cut and boil the vegetables in the kitchen; look after the bank accounts, cash and cheques; do the cleaning; take care of the people who are sick, from dawn to dusk. When the sun rises you see the ashram humming with activity like a beehive, and when the sun sets the ashram is still very active.

The inmates of the ashram live a very simple life and the guests or visitors who come from outside are also obliged to live that life. That simplicity of life is a type of penance. Therefore, as far as my ashrams are concerned, I have just one objective in mind – to keep alive an atmosphere which will accelerate the pace of evolution in spiritual life.

27

Structuring an Ashram

Swami Satyananda gives instructions on ashram management to his young Spanish disciples. Recorded in Barcelona, Spain, in August 1979.

I am pleased to see you have a very nice place here where you will be able to conduct many yoga classes. Remember that every effort you make to teach yoga will become immortal. You can record this in your diary and keep it in mind throughout life. This ashram may appear to be a very small beginning, but it will definitely do a lot of good for the people.

Now, what is important in this respect is that you put all your positive personality into your teaching. Everyone has a positive and a negative aspect in his personality. Some have more negative than positive and others have more positive than negative. I don't expect perfection from you, but it is important that you have the courage, discipline, strength and knack to project only the positive and resist the negative. If you dedicate yourself completely to the task of teaching yoga, it will be easy to express the positive side of your personality.

When you are teaching yoga, you must pre-program your life properly, and right from the morning until you go to bed at night, you must be industrious, active and creative. I have visited thousands of yoga schools throughout the world during the last twelve years, but I have not been impressed by any of

them because their teachers have not shown any creativity. By creativity, I mean that you should be able to give the best of your personality to your students. And this is only possible if you have self-discipline. Discipline does not mean cruelty; it is a compassionate life of integration.

Now, concerning classes, in this institute you should teach asanas, pranayama and all other forms of yoga. I will not make the daily program for you, you will have to establish that according to the needs of the people and at times which are convenient for them. However, you must fit as many classes into the day as possible. Each class should last for one and a quarter hours. Then the teacher will need half an hour's rest before commencing the next class.

Now, there are two things you must guard your institution from. Firstly, you should see that the antisocial or low class elements do not penetrate it. Secondly, the school should not be an anti-cultural institute. Every country has its own culture, religion and government, and you must work very positively and systematically in accordance with them.

I have seen many yoga institutes where hippies have infiltrated and the boys and girls sleep very carelessly. They put funny photographs everywhere and the school becomes very dirty. The ashram should be neat, clean and decent at all times. If at any time a minister or high ranking government official wants to learn yoga, he should be interested in coming here. He should be drawn by the radiance of your personality. Age does not limit the personality. In fact, if a young person has maturity in his personality, this is tremendously impressive to others.

Inside the ashram there should only be yoga, or maybe some programs pertaining to yoga. You must keep the ashram free of political and mundane talk, gossip and scandals. You must all help to maintain a clean atmosphere, clean floors, clean walls, clean Guruji. Everything must be very clean. I am very strict about photographs on the walls. Many people put chakras and yantras, this Guruji and that Guruji, pictures of all sorts of flowers and temples. Then the place becomes

like a museum. All you need is a yogasana chart and a chakra chart. Either you get one of your artistic students or swamis to paint them, or you make them by pasting photographs onto a sheet of cardboard. I have also brought a beautiful chart for you.

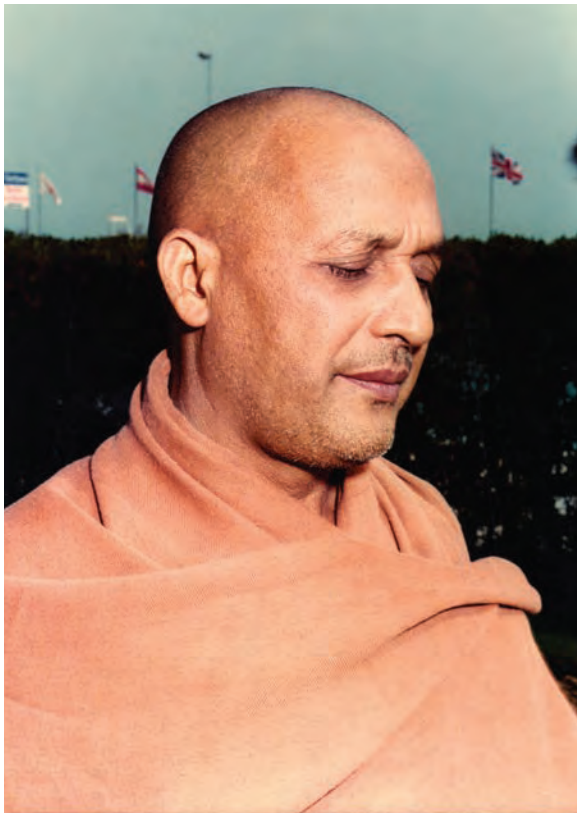
Now, when students come to the ashram, they should be presented with a list of rules to abide by within the ashram. Don't make many rules, just four or five. It should be something like this: 'While you are here in the ashram, please observe the following rules which have been made for your benefit and that of others. Keep your conversations to a quiet minimum. Do not gossip or participate in controversial discussions. Do not smoke on these premises.' If you don't encourage the students to maintain a quiet atmosphere in the ashram, it could end up sounding just like a fish market.

If a student is not behaving properly and he is giving you problems, you must deal with this situation in a particular way. You must not say anything to him. First you must inform your elders. Even if you have to do some very unpleasant work, it can be done in a pleasant way.

Now, regarding student's dress, I think they should wear whatever clothing they find comfortable. There is no need for them to wear a definite type of clothing or a particular colour. Also, don't influence anybody to shave their head. Remember, we are sannyasins and they are householders. Our lives are different, although we share the one goal. They reach it through the senses, we attain it through renunciation, but in any case, both can reach it.

There is one more point I want to add so you will keep proper account books. As far as financial matters are concerned, this institution must be very clean, systematic and thorough. The person who looks after the entries must be very neat and organized so that any time you want, you can check the whole register. Remember that everything that comes into the ashram comes for a purpose. Not a private purpose, but a public purpose.

Now, for the final word. Always keep in mind that the teacher is the servant. A servant is one who does service. He should not have a swollen head. After a few months of teaching yoga, you should not think you have become the Christ. When the clouds are full of water, they spill their contents to the earth. When trees are laden with fruit, they bend. In the same way, when a person is filled with the highest qualities, he becomes very humble. An arrogant or aggressive teacher is like a tree without fruits. So, in front of your chelas you must be very humble. And for you, yoga teaching should be a passage for evolution.



28

Don't Seek Security in an Ashram

Some people think an ashram is a place where the weak-minded can escape from the world and bask in an aura of security. Here Swami Satyananda talks about the way of life in an ashram, its purpose and how its very structure can bring out all the elements of insecurity in an individual. Taped and at Satyanandashram Barcelona, Spain, in September 1980.

A lot can be said about ashram life. Living in an ashram may give you some sort of social security, but at the same time it brings out all the elements of insecurity which you have in your mind. Of course, this does not happen if the ashram is a big and wealthy institution, but most ashrams are very humble. They will not have thousands of hectares of property and bank balances of millions of dollars. They won't have government ministers and officials on the board of directors and elections which are a big event. An ashram should consist of just ten, twenty or thirty rooms, with a very simple kitchen to maintain the requirements of the body, a few places to store your clothes and a place where you can sleep at night. This is all an ashram should be.

Besides this, an ashram should provide some sort of karma yoga. This could be in the field of agriculture, dairy farming or handicrafts, depending on the type of people living there. In the Tibetan monasteries, the monks used to manufacture handmade paper and copy the ancient scriptures onto it by

hand. Each monk was allocated a specific time for his turn at the work. A few of them also prepared *tankas*, big Tibetan batiks, which were sold to merchants in exchange for potatoes and butter. This is how the monks lived and maintained their monastery.

Years ago, when I was in Rishikesh, I went from there to Mount Kailash in Tibet, which was not part of China then. I stayed a night at one of the gompas. A gumpa is a type of monastery or ashram. It is a place where renunciates live with a few disciples. You cannot imagine what their life was like. It was so isolated that hardly any news reached them and the climate was so harsh that nothing grew. The market was perhaps five days away. But what a fantastic library that little ashram had! There were thousands of manuscripts, and each manuscript was beautifully encased between wooden covers and wrapped in silk cloth. The library was lit by candelabra and the lamas cleaned it every day from top to bottom and spent the rest of their day reading the scriptures. So that was the pattern of ashram life there, but it could not be the same in every ashram. When boys and girls come to you, you have to provide them with something that will keep their minds properly occupied.

In my opinion, an ashram should go in for agricultural farming. This helps both the individual and society. Society gains because you can supply it with organic food which will improve people's health, and the individual gains because he is living out in the fresh air and working with nature. By living in contact with the mud and soil, the water, air and sun and the whole of nature, automatically and quite effortlessly, one is able to eliminate the biological causes of mental impurity.

If you are contemplating ashram life, you should not expect it to be secure because its purpose is not security. Its purpose springs from the fact that man has realized that there is suffering in the world and he must adapt himself to handle it. Why do you come to an ashram? Because you have already experienced suffering and you have realized that your life is incomplete. No sensible person comes to the ashram to find a

comfortable life, because there are no comforts in an ashram. In my Munger ashram, all I have to offer the people who built the ashram with their donations is a place to sleep.

If anybody comes to the ashram for security, he is a first class idiot, because he'll never find security there. And there is no source of emotional excitement either; you are just alone with yourself. Don't expect friendship; you will have to face loneliness, but you will come to understand it. You will learn to live with yourself, with your spirit. That is what ashrams are all about.

However, the modern culture has cast its influence on some ashrams. In the West there are many ashrams which are centrally heated, and you can get butter, cheese, brown bread and spaghetti there. In some ashrams you can even get eggs because they consider that vegetarian. But in my opinion these are not ashrams but yoga schools. An ashram is a place where your body and mind are tested to the utmost extent.



29

Combating Disease in the Ashram

At the Transmission Seminar Swami Satyananda conducted in Chamarande, France, he discussed the interrelationship of the body, the mind and the emotions. He talked about his own encounters with sickness when he lived in Rishikesh and he explained why doctors have little success in their dealings with cancer. Taped on 5 September 1980.

Ashram life is extremely beneficial for those who are suffering physically or mentally. It is not essential that everybody attempts a physical cure. There are four different human temperaments. Some people are dynamic by nature, others are devotional or emotional. Some are psychic and others are rational. Therefore, in an ashram, everybody participates according to his temperament, but there is one important thing he has to remember. His attitude towards disease should not be the same as it was when he was with his family.

Disease belongs to the body, and in most cases it affects the mind. When disease affects the mind, the mind becomes depressed, and that is what happens when a person stays with his family. In ashram life you have to dissociate the mind from the body through willpower. There is no denial of the fact that the body is sick, but why should the mind become sick? Therefore, in the ashram, those who are sick must develop a different attitude.

I have lived the ashram life for about forty years. And because I have experienced it as a disciple and as a guru, I am

well aware of the physical and mental reactions of a disciple. During my life as a disciple, I once had typhoid, but I didn't know what I was suffering from. There was no one to advise me and I had to find a room for myself. Everything was so difficult. I had no boiled water to drink and no medical assistance. However, I managed because I thought, "Disease belongs to the body, let it stay there. There is no reason why it should affect my mind. I will think about nice things." So I used to read books. After some time, I was free from typhoid.

There was another time when I was walking to Rishikesh from the ashram and an aged sannyasin stopped me on the way. He said, "Hey, you have jaundice!" I did not know what jaundice was. When I returned to the ashram I told Swami Sivananda what that sannyasin had said. Swamiji was a doctor and he said, "Yes, you have got it." I asked him, "What should I do?" He said, "Nothing."

Now, do you understand how a person living in an ashram has to manage his mind and body? Physical sickness is one thing, but what happens is that it affects the mind. When the mind is affected, the disease becomes serious. And if you do not take care of it, it affects the emotions. And when the emotions are affected, then only God can help you. So, whenever anyone is sick in the ashram, I always tell them, "Please take proper rest." Here, 'proper rest' means mental, physical and emotional rest.

Finally, the truth is this. When the physical body and the mind are affected by the disease, the remedy is beyond sight, but when you can dissociate the mind from the body, the sickness can be remedied like magic. That's how it happens in spiritual healing. What the healer does is separate the mind. When the mind is separated from the sick body, then the process of treatment, or of healing, takes effect almost overnight.

Now, supposing a person is suffering from some fatal disease like cancer. When I was young, it was not cancer but tuberculosis. Up until about 1928, if anyone had tuberculosis,

his days were numbered. We never heard of cancer or high blood pressure. They came with our technological civilization and with the chemical and preserved foods. Anyway, if a person is suffering from cancer, you have to remember that he is suffering physically, mentally and emotionally, and that the disease has gone into his astral body. This means there is cancer in his body, in his mind, in his emotions and in his astral body.

Now, the poor doctor is only treating the body, and therefore nothing happens. If there was a method by which you could dissociate the physical cancer from the mind, the emotions and the astral body, the treatment would be miraculous. That's why in the ashram, the first task of the patient is to try and dissociate the mind from the sick body.



30

Modern Medicine

Asked for his opinion of modern medicine and surgery, Swami Satyananda talks about his own study of medicine and why he believes medical sciences should only be used in cases of emergency. Taped at Satyananda Ashram Paris, France, on 18 May 1980.

I have studied medicine and the person who taught me was my guru, so how can I speak against that? Medical science was my science and the masters who taught me were my gurus. Therefore, I pay my respects to the science and the teachers. Although many people were against medical science, I don't believe it is useless. Like every other science, modern medicine has its own role to play in human health. Of course it has its limitations but we should accept them just as we do in yoga. Yes, yoga has its limitations too. For example, if a person is suffering from typhoid, you don't ask him to practise bhastrika pranayama. You know he will die if he does.

Throughout the ages, thinking people have evolved different systems for treating disease. One of the best and most scientific systems is ayurveda, a science which grew up amongst the Hindu people. Then there is another wonderful science called homeopathy. It is a very natural science which has greatly reduced the cost of treating illness and disease. In India we are very grateful to homeopathy because whereas modern medicine can cost hundreds of thousands of rupees, homeopathic remedies may not even cost you one rupee.

Of course, the most widespread system of treatment is the modern science of allopathy. So we should have respect for all the sciences.

However, we should not believe that medicines can give us health. Health is always a positive aspect and not a negative one. When you take a pill to ensure sound sleep, it is negative health. The quality of sleep that results is negative. If you want to overcome insomnia in a positive way, you change your environment and go to the mountains for a short holiday, run a little bit, do some other exercise, and then you will be able to sleep well. This is positive health. If you don't feel like eating, you don't take medicines for that. Just fast for one day, that will give you positive health. But if you take a little medicine from me and eat after that, it is negative health.

Negative health is totally unreliable, it can break at any moment. Positive health is very reliable and you do not have to rely on any external agencies. You may or may not know it, but your body can manufacture its own antibiotics. This body contains cortisone, adrenaline and so on. We have only to discover the means of tapping our internal source. One way to do this is to fast one day per week, or once in a fortnight. If you find it too difficult to fast, then take a saltless diet, or abstain from all animal products for a considerable period of time. By animal products I don't only mean meat and eggs; milk, curd, cheese and butter are also included. If you do this, the toxins in your body will be eliminated, and at the same time you will be removing the cause of the disease. Once the body is free of toxins, the natural antibiotics, cortisone, adrenaline, etc. will begin to flow through the body.

Therefore, with all respect to the medical sciences, I think they should only be used when there is an emergency. For instance, on the battlefield you can't practise yoga. If the soldier is suffering from catarrh, you have to make him better quickly so you can put him back on the battlefield with his gun. As a matter of fact, the medical sciences only developed during the wars, because it was vitally important to ensure the soldiers would gain rapid relief so they could be out with their

guns the next morning. If you tried to keep your soldiers in a tent practising yoga nidra for fifteen days, you would surely lose your whole country. So we should not be angry with the surgeons.

My guru, Swami Sivananda, was a doctor with the highest degree, FRCS. Once I asked him, “Why did you abandon the medical profession?” He answered, “Man’s maladies are beyond the scope of medicine. Medicines cannot cure his sufferings and they cannot take away his sorrows. Medicines cannot help him in overcoming his passions, and that is why I have accepted yoga in place of medicine.” And this is exactly my own situation.



31

The Hindu Concept of Creation

Swami Satyananda talks about the different theories of creation and evolution and mentions the coming of a new race of supermen. Recorded at the Transmission Seminar held in Chamarande, France, in September 1980.

The Hindus view creation in the same light as the scientists. They do not believe that there is an actual creator, but that creativity is inherent in nature itself. There is a universal law and the creator of that law is *prakriti*, nature. They also believe that creation is a beginningless continuity; you can't say that this is the first day of creation. There are millions of stars, suns and planets and they are all subject to a constant process of creation and destruction, creation and destruction.

At this moment, maybe thousands of planets are being destroyed, while at another point thousands are being formed from nebulae. According to the law, disintegration and reintegration are always taking place. First there is nothing; then there is water, followed by aquatic animals; then there are reptiles, followed by mammals; then savages, followed by human beings. According to Hindu philosophy, this is the process of creation.

Now, this topic is widely discussed in the Hindu religion, and throughout the ages, in different ways, the sages have been answering questions such as: What is the cause of creation? Where did we come from? How do we exist? Where shall

we go to? There are sects who believe in ‘original sin’, like the Christians. However, Vedanta does not believe in it. It says, “You are atman. You have come from pure self and therefore you are pure.” The view of Samkhya is different again. It says that man is born in the tamasic state and he has to grow to sattwa and samadhi.

However, most Hindus believe in a different theory. They say life has evolved through 84 lakhs of wombs. This means that life has evolved through mineral, vegetable, lower animal and higher animal to human beings, and therefore every life has passed through different species. And now that you have become a human being, your first duty is to live in spiritual consciousness. In so many of the Hindu scriptures, poems and songs, you find the same two lines: “After passing through so many lives, by God’s grace you have become a human being. Therefore, live in spirit.”

Amongst the Hindus, there are also thinkers who believe that because man made a mistake, he remains in ignorance. However, these thinkers form a minority group, as most people find this an illogical approach. They cannot believe that because of sin we have become human beings. We believe that a human being is in a most privileged situation because he is aware of God and can attain illumination in this life itself. Even though animals and other creatures may be very intelligent, the path is barred for them because they are still in the tamasic state. Awareness of the self, the atman and God is a special faculty which has been given to man.

So, primarily, Hindus believe in the theory of evolution. And according to them, this physical body is not the ultimate and finished product of nature. Something more is yet to come. Just as the animal body is not the finished product of nature, in the same way, this physical body of man is also not the finished product. Nature will create another form which will enable man to awaken kundalini more conveniently.

Of course, this physical body is well constructed. It has the five *jnanendriyas* or sense organs and the five *karmendriyas* or motor organs, and then there is the brain. But there is still

something more that man has to develop called intuition or the supermind. Aldous Huxley, Annie Besant and many other Western thinkers have glimpsed that race to come. We are not that race but we are its predecessors.

The human body will undergo some changes. In this present physical body there are sensual demands, but in order to develop the supermind, sensual demands must be minimal. Therefore, nature will have to do something to minimize the excitement of the senses. It may take one hundred years, or maybe even five thousand, I don't know, but this will not happen overnight. Don't think that one fine day everybody will wake up and find that they have become supermen.

Of course there have been supermen in the past: the yogis, the saints and the prophets, but these have been few. In the future there will be a race of supermen. So this is the fundamental theory of the Hindus, which says that after this there is going to be one more great evolution of the human body. Although everything will not happen in one day, it has already started happening.



32

Sexual Concepts

Asked to comment on his concept of sexual life for married and unmarried people, Swami Satyananda explains how people form their concepts according to their particular temperament and conditioning. He also says religions should form their laws, not according to their ideals, but according to man's capacity. Taped at Bihar School of Yoga, Munger, on 9 January 1981 during satsang with a group of Colombian yoga aspirants.

You have asked me what my concept is, but my concept cannot be the ultimate concept. It is a private, personal concept. I believe in two things: my concept is my capacity, and what the great men have said I accept as truth, even if it is very difficult for me to understand.

Supposing I drink wine and I like it. That's my concept, but I can't say it's good to drink. If I want to know if it is good or not, I will have to ask the wise or realized men. Now, if you ask me about sexual concepts, for all you know I might be a victim of sexual weaknesses, so what I say cannot hold as a philosophy. You have to find the truth, and of course it has been said many times.

If you read the Vedas of the Hindus, the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, the Koran, Ramayana or Mahabharata, you will find they have all given definite views about sexual life. Of all the major religions, Hinduism has the broadest outlook. Christianity has also presented its views,

but remember, this religion is only nineteen hundred years old and it has not faced the problems of mankind as yet. Only in the last four hundred years has Christianity been confronted with a new question posed by new people. The Hindu religion, however, has had to face questions, problems and challenges for so many millennia.

Hinduism was once orthodox in the concept of *brahmacharya*, absolute celibacy. However, this was found to be too difficult for the majority of people to follow, so Hinduism had to accept the alternative of marital life. In the course of time, they found that even marital life did not provide the complete solution. Many people wanted to have extramarital relationships as well, and if they didn't have them, perhaps there would be criminal assaults. In such a situation what can the religion do? It has to accept what people want and organize it. And even then, after permission for extramarital relationships had been granted, still molestation and rape continued. So, a great religion cannot simply adhere to its own fixed beliefs, it has to take into consideration what the people are capable of.

There are sattvic people, those who are harmonious, calm and quiet and who have balanced sexual impulses. There are rajasic people with aggressive sexual impulses and urges, and there are tamasic people with inhuman sexual urges. All three types of people are living in your society, and their ratio is 1:2:3 – harmonious: aggressive: inhuman. Now, in this case, what should my concept be?

My concept is that if you can't find harmony with the normal, religious, marital life, you must come to yoga and then go to tantra. Make self-realization the main issue of your life. First you must make *atma jnana* or self-knowledge the purpose of your life, then, if you want to have a free and sensuous sexual life, you can have it.

For a person dedicated to a higher purpose, sexual life is not a barrier. But for a person who has no spiritual aim in life, for whom the sexual act is an animal act, and whose sexual energy only flows downwards because he does not know how

to upgrade it to the higher centres, for him sexual life does become a barrier.

There are three different views about sexual life. From the viewpoint of brahmacharya, celibacy is the way to immortality and loss of semen is death. The second view is to live your sexual life in an organized way, control your mind and control your impulses. If you can't do this, then purify your diet and change your lifestyle and habits. The third concept says there is no harm in having sexual intercourse because this is the natural urge of the body and mind, but if you can renounce it or abstain, the rewards will be very great. This is the concept of tantra. It says that although sexual life can lead to man's downfall, it can also be a springboard for the awakening of kundalini and spiritual life.

Now, as for myself, I was born into a Hindu family, so my mind is very conditioned. I still believe in one for one, and that up to the age of twenty-one, one must be celibate. This is so ingrained in my mind that I hold it as my concept.



33

The Purpose of Sexual Life

The following talk was given by Swami Satyananda at the Transmission Seminar he conducted in Chamarande, France, in September 1980.

From time immemorial, man has been trying to understand the role of sexual life in the context of his spiritual evolution. Although it has been said that the sexual functions are a remnant of animal life, somehow, man has never been able to accept this. All along he has been wondering why nature created this special process. What is the purpose behind sexual life?

Sexual union between man and woman is part of the natural law of evolution. In every realm of nature, union between the two forces is taking place all the time. Creation of life, energy, matter is not possible unless the positive and negative forces unite. It is not the physical body that matters, but the quantum and nature of energy. One of the most important ways of creating energy is through sexual interaction between a man and a woman.

This is the highest concept, but man is still bound by his instinctive nature. He doesn't understand this philosophy of energy. He just runs after pleasure. He does not even know that pleasure is the outcome of the union between the two energy poles. Man and woman come together just to have a child. They don't know that the creation of a child is nothing more

than the two forces of energy becoming manifest in the mother's womb. Energy interplay is the cosmic law. The sun, moon, stars, ocean and earth, all are the interaction of energy.

The ultimate source of energy is prakriti. This homogeneous, omnipresent force pervades the body, mind and consciousness. It never stagnates, it is in constant motion. If you do not know how to direct this energy upwards, it finds expression in gross, mundane life. In India, the mahatmas and rishis realized this through their own experience and thus they devised a system for directing this great force in man which expresses itself in the form of sexual life. This science became known as the path of tantra.

Tantra is not a path of sexual life but a way of channelling the sexual energy from a gross to a high level. This process is not brought about by believing or following any particular line of faith. The sublimation of sexual energy for the purpose of spiritual illumination needs a concrete process of practice. Even in ancient times there were practices known to the people and evidence of this can be seen in the archaeological remains from different cultures. In the present culture, however, these practices have been lost and man has only experienced the grosser aspects of sexual life. He has not followed it back to the primal cause. In modern society there is so much guilt, frustration and psychological disease for one simple reason: no one has understood the higher nature of sexual life.

According to tantra every man and woman should know the basic fundamental kriyas: vajroli, sahajoli and amaroli. It should be understood very clearly by everyone that the ultimate purpose of sexual life is the awakening of mooladhara chakra. The momentary pleasure derived from the sexual act is just a window through which you can see beyond. No doubt there are many other ways for awakening the spiritual potential. You can do it through penance, fasting or pranayama, but the easiest and quickest way is through the proper performance of the sexual act. That is the real purpose behind sexual life.

The experience of awakening kundalini is unbearable. The ordinary orgasm only lasts for a few seconds, and even that short period is an exploding experience. Imagine if it continued for ten minutes! No one could handle it. So sexual life is a preparation for this awakening. It balances the emotions, calms the passions, and minimizes the excitement of the mind, so that day by day you become more aware of inner life.

When a man and woman live together, they represent Shiva and Shakti. Therefore, they must learn to interact with a spiritual purpose, to give birth to the manifestation of energy. Love and affection are not sinful, but there should be clarity and discipline rather than anarchy. Then the sexual act becomes a powerful means for awakening higher consciousness.



34

The Meaning of Sakshi

Swami Satyananda talks about the witnessing spirit we must all try to develop. If only we could witness our thoughts and actions instead of being so involved in them, we would find more amusement in life. Recorded on 31 August 1980 at the Transmission Seminar Swamiji conducted in Chamarande, France.

Sakshi is a vedantic term meaning witness. When you practise mantra you know that you are practising it, and you also know that a part of you knows that you are practising it. That seer in you is called *sakshi*. When you sit quietly for meditation, you follow your symbol for some time. Then, when the symbol is stabilized, you turn within and find out who is aware of the symbol. Who is aware of thought? Who is aware of greed? And who is aware of knowledge?

In each of us, there is a witnessing spirit that is constantly watching every event in our lives. Even if you are deep in sleep, still you witness that you slept. If I ask in the morning, “How did you sleep?” you might say, “Very well.” If you slept, how can you know? It’s because at that time the witness in you was awake.

This witnessing spirit in man does not alter in spite of the changing states of consciousness. Throughout the fifty or sixty years of our life, we continue to remember that we are the same person. This witnessing self is known as *sakshi*. It is the third eye in man. When you practise yoga and meditation,

you should follow the practice or your experience for a long time, and when it is stabilized, you turn and become aware of this sakshi.

There are three aspects inherent in meditation: the mediator, the object of meditation and the process of meditation. In the beginning, there is awareness of the object and the process. Once you have transcended the process of meditation and you have stabilized the object, very slowly turn the knob of your mind and look at the seer. Look at the meditator and meditate on the meditator. That is called the witnessing spirit in meditation.

Everybody is subject to mental and emotional turmoil. Grief can cause it and so can happiness. Failure disturbs the mind and so does success. Anyway, whenever your mind is disturbed, stop for a moment, turn your mind away from the grief or happiness and try to become aware of that person who is experiencing the grief or happiness. Look at the person who is unhappy. Look at that person who is happy. Look at the person who is depressed and crying. It's so funny to see yourself crying. And if you could see yourself running about from morning until evening looking so serious and involved in everything, you would be quite amazed. There comes a time when everything seems to be an idiosyncrasy.

I don't know how and why it happened, but about forty-five to fifty years ago, I suddenly began seeing myself. I saw myself going to school, walking on the road, going to the pictures and market place. I saw myself fighting, quarrelling, loving, hating, begging, eating, drinking and sleeping as if I were looking at a television. I thought, "Hey, what is this fun I'm making?" I began to laugh at myself. It seemed like a crazy man was doing everything. This was a very short experience which faded away. Then I was involved in all the same things again. However, the experience recurred a number of times, presenting me with awareness of what I was doing. There is so much identification between the witness and the karma that we seldom know exactly what we are doing.

Well, supposing I select one of you and I follow you like a shadow. I witness everything you do throughout the day and I also know all that you think in your bedroom and bathroom. What would I think of you? You would look very funny. One has to try the same thing for oneself. That is called the sadhana of witnessing the spirit and that is what we practise as antar mouna.

Antar mouna is a technique where you do not control your thoughts; you allow your mind to witness what is happening within you. What you are seeing, feeling and thinking, your psychological and emotional personalities, your intellectual experiences, they all become objects of your witnessing. And thereby the karmas take flight and equilibrium prevails.



35

Dhyana Yoga

Here Swami Satyananda explains that meditation trains the mind to manage all the circumstances of life and enables man to experience his life with full awareness. Taped in Frankfurt, Germany, on 8 May 1980.

In the last fifty years or so, yoga has come to rescue man from his crisis and has induced significant changes in many parts of the world. Although hatha yoga, the physical side of yoga, has become very popular, in comparison, few have been exposed to the most important branch of yoga – dhyana yoga. It is this yoga which is going to play a major role in deciding man's future destiny.

I hope you know what dhyana yoga is. In yoga, we call meditation *dhyana yoga*; it actually means the yoga of total awareness. When your mind is grasping and contemplating an object or idea completely, that stage is known as dhyana. Man's mind is usually so dissipated that he cannot grasp anything in totality. Therefore, dhyana is not something that can be developed instantaneously; it takes many years or months of regular daily practice.

And what does meditation do? Does it make you forget your life? Does it enable you to escape from reality? Or do you become unconscious? What happens in meditation? The great seers of old and the modern day scientists have said that during the practices of meditation, a great trans-

formation takes place in the practitioner's mind. And this transformation facilitates the process of evolution in man's consciousness.

You send your children to school, college and university so their intellects will be developed and trained, but what do you do to sharpen your own mental faculties? Today, many of us are facing a crisis simply because our knowledge of life is so inadequate. If you brought a very simple Eskimo villager to one of these great German cities, he wouldn't be able to adjust and would probably meet with an accident on the highway. In the same way, our minds are often too incompetent to face the realities of this modern life.

Today we have everything, but still our minds are unable to get the best out of it. In your beautiful homes and comfortable beds, you pass sleepless nights. With a wonderful husband or wife and beautiful children, you live a life of anxiety and fear. And with a fat bank balance and everything by your side, still you are dissatisfied. Is this not incompetence of mind? You have everything in your pocket, but still you cannot use it. This is because your mind is unable to manage the situations of life. And this is precisely why there are so many people in the world who are unhappy.

Man's unhappiness is not merely due to social or economic conditions. Unhappiness is an expression of a sick mind. If you are unhappy, you should understand that your mind needs overhauling and transformation. And there is no greater science for the job than the science of meditation. Kindly remember that meditation is not a passive but a dynamic process. A dynamic process makes an evolutionary change in the mind. It makes the mind more competent, strong, adaptable and intuitive. Now, how to meditate?

Meditation starts with the preparation of the body: the nervous system, the heart, the respiratory system and the brain. In order to prepare the body you must practise hatha yoga, which you should never consider as merely physical exercises. It is the means of creating harmony between the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. By

practising asanas, pranayama, mudras and bandhas, you are preparing yourself for dhyana yoga.

Now, when you start practising meditation, you must know that it is not merely a mental practice. Meditation influences the body. It has an effect on the heart, the digestive system, the hormones and the endocrine glands. It has also been found that during meditation the brainwave patterns alter and the neuronal responses throughout the body are influenced.

However, the most important effect of meditation is that it awakens the dormant centres of the brain. And surely every man's aim is to illumine the silent areas of his brain so that he can live and enjoy life with full knowledge and awareness. The easiest way to practise meditation is to become totally aware of one object within you. Then the whole brain begins to function. So this is the aim of dhyana yoga – to evolve the total consciousness of man.



36

Is Meditation Dangerous?

Here Swami Satyananda reveals that the dangers of meditation are a myth. Recorded in Thessalonika, Greece, on 8 April 1981 at the First Pan Hellenic Convention of Yoga and Health.

Meditation is the most beneficial and risk-free practice mankind has ever known. In all the different religions and cultures, meditation exists, even though it may be referred to with different names. Hindus call it dhyana and Buddhists call it jhana. From this the Chinese formed the word chuan and then the Japanese called it Zen. In Christianity it is known as prayer. Nowadays people are referring to meditation when they speak of reflection, contemplation, witnessing, awareness and so on.

Meditation is not a very difficult practice. Everybody knows how to meditate, even though they may not be aware of it. Each night, when you are in profound sleep, the whole world and all pains are dead to you. When you sleep, there are no passions and emotions, there is no time and no space, there is no 'I' and there is no duality. These are also absent in dhyana, but there is one significant difference. In deep sleep there is total unconsciousness, there is no self-awareness, but during meditation there is profound awareness. If you could impose self-awareness in your deep sleep, then that would be dhyana yoga, meditation.

Therefore, how can meditation be dangerous? If meditation is dangerous, then sleep is equally dangerous. Don't sleep

from today because it is dangerous. People are really funny; meditation is dangerous to them, and so are kundalini yoga, pranayama and sirshasana, but they don't consider cigarettes, alcohol and so many other things to be dangerous. It is a pity that the negative mind thinks like this.

Meditation is one of the most important sciences for mankind. If man can be differentiated from animals, it is only through meditation, as the practice of meditation accelerates the possibilities and pace of the evolution of consciousness. Scientific studies have shown that during meditation the larger, frontal brain becomes active and the smaller brain becomes dormant. The smaller brain represents animal incarnation; it is the seat of instinct. The midbrain represents intellect and reasoning, and the frontal brain represents intuition. Most people are guided by the animal or instinctive brain.

In the same way, there are two systems of breathing: instinctive breathing and mindful breathing. Usually, when we look at the sky, we don't know that we are looking. Most of the time we think, but we don't know that we are thinking. Almost constantly we are moving our bodies, but we are not aware of it. This is automatic instinctive animal behaviour, which we have inherited. In this human incarnation we have to become mindful of everything. When you are mindful of everything that is happening inside and outside of you, you are developing the frontal brain and transcending the animal brain.

Meditation is the practice of mindfulness. And when you have perfected this practice and mindfulness becomes constant and unbroken, it culminates in samadhi. Awakening of the frontal brain is very important for human evolution, and when you practise dhyana yoga, the process begins to take place in the frontal area of the brain. Therefore, in dhyana yoga one of the most important practices we teach is concentration on the mid-eyebrow centre, the site of the third eye.

The third eye represents intuition. The second eye represents intellect and reasoning and the first eye represents

instinct and automatism. Animals move by the first eye, human beings move by the second and yogis move by the third eye. One of the ultimate purposes of evolution is to develop the third eye.

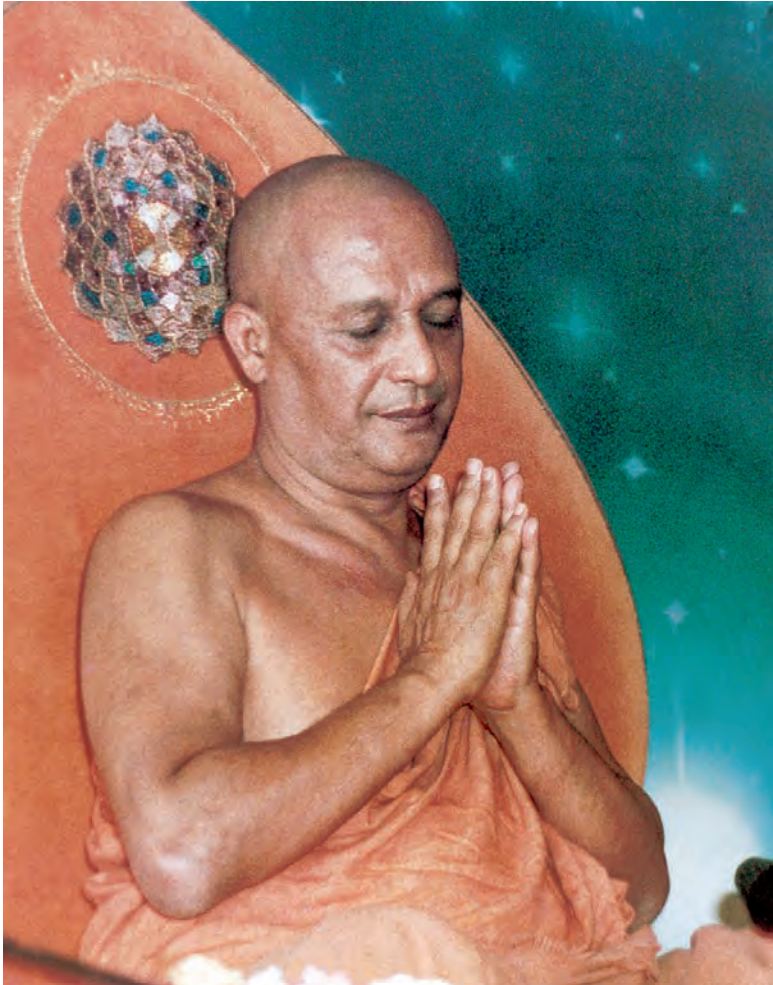
When you concentrate on the mid-eyebrow centre, with the eyes open or closed, at the point you will see a very tiny flame of light. When you focus on that light, gradually the pranas in the body are concentrated in the mid-eyebrow centre and then enlightenment takes place. Therefore, you should be very regular in your meditation practice.

If at all there is any danger in meditation, it could only be that when you practise regularly, your mental blocks, faults and attachments drop away. You may also find that you have become more clever and intellectually sharp, and you cannot be exploited, either by the government, society, religion, family, friends or relatives. That is the danger. Those who meditate become very independent. They don't depend on love or hatred, money, property or security. There is nothing they depend on. They are secure in themselves because they are not afraid of anything. This is a truth which can be revealed through meditation.

Therefore, those who want to keep us a slave of passions, or who want to exploit us emotionally, say that meditation is dangerous. Often in a marriage relationship, if the husband is practising meditation, the wife will demand that he stop, or if the wife practises, the husband will demand that she stop. Why? Because they have a fear of losing their loved one. But it does not matter. If you lose the comforts and luxuries of life, or you lose your beloved or relatives it does not matter. Even if you lose the whole world what does it matter? But one thing you should never lose is the lighthouse that is within you.

In this infinite ocean of life, if you lose sight of that light, you are doomed to destruction. Man should not be without a destination, but more important than that is the lighthouse. Which way should a person go? We can see two points clearly: the world of the mind and senses and the silent corner of the

self within. When you enter the wilderness of the sensory forest, you are dissipated and disturbed, tense and depressed, but when you enter into the silent area of consciousness and the self within you, what you experience is *shanti* or peace. The wise man barterers everything for shanti, but he will not barter anything for sensual pleasure.



37

What is Good and What is Bad?

Swami Satyananda explains why good and bad cannot be defined. Recorded in a satsang at the Scandinavian School of Yoga and Meditation, Stockholm, Sweden, on 15 May 1980.

As I was born a Hindu, I have heard a lot about good and bad. And I am of the opinion that religions have failed to lead man to goodness. Anyone who has studied history will know that religion has been responsible for the greatest massacres ever committed. Even today you can see it for yourself. Religions have become nothing more than socio-political creeds. But the actual word 'religion' has an entirely different meaning. *Re* means again and *ligion* means connect. The individual soul is separated from the universal soul, and when you connect them, that is called religion. But which religion is doing this? Most of them are only trying to increase their numbers. Therefore, religion cannot teach us what is good and what is bad.

Another important point is that there is no ultimate definition of good and bad. All the greatest philosophers of India and the West have tried to define what is good and what is evil, but it is relative. What was good fifty years ago is evil today. What is evil today might become good within another century. And who are we to judge right from wrong and good from bad? One minute something may appear to be good and five minutes later it is absolutely bad. Here is a story which will illustrate the point.

Once there was a farmer who lost his most valuable horse. His neighbour came to him and gave his commiserations, but the farmer said, "Who knows what is good or bad?" His attitude was borne out the next day when the horse returned with a herd of wild horses it had befriended. This time the neighbour came over to congratulate the farmer, but he received the same reply, "Who knows what is good or bad?" This too was justified because the next day the farmer's son fell off one of the wild horses and broke his leg. Back came the neighbour with his commiserations. Again came the farmer's answer, "Who knows what is good or bad?" The farmer proved to be correct again because the next day the army came to the town conscripting young men to fight in the war, and because the farmer's son had a broken leg they did not take him.

Even though good and bad cannot be defined, there are certain eternal values which are not social but spiritual. What are they ? We have to think about them. The important point is that in order to practise good, you need a different mind. In order to avoid evil you need a strong mind. If I am suffering from jaundice, everything will appear to be yellow. Even if something is distinctly blue, I will only see it as yellow because my eyes are jaundiced.

Now, with this weak mind, how can you practise virtue? I don't believe it is possible unless you improve the quality of your mind first. If you are going to climb a steep hill, you will need strong legs. If you are carrying thirty or forty kilos of weight to the third floor, you must have strong muscles. You can't expect your two-year-old son to carry that. In the same way, if you want to practise virtue and if you want to resist the evil in your mind, you will have to improve the quality of your mind.

How can you improve the quality of your mind? Just by reading books? No, you have to put your mind through a process of transformation. In tantra nothing is good and nothing is bad. There is a tantric maxim which says, "One must rise through that by which one falls." In other words,

what you consider evil or bad can be used as a springboard to make the leap to goodness.

What is evil? It is ignorance of mind. What is good? It is the reality which you can realize within yourself in deep meditation. However, in society, good and bad will always exist; you cannot efface them. Religion will continue to define good and bad, but according to tantra, we can commence our onward march from any point.



38

The History of Tantra

In this brief talk, Swami Satyananda explains how tantra developed and why it seems to have only survived in India. Recorded during a satsang at the Scandinavian School of Yoga and Meditation, Stockholm, Sweden, on 14 May 1980.

Tantra is the oldest system known to mankind and it was in existence much before the civilization of Atlantis. When exactly it started I cannot say, but I can explain how it came into existence. Supposing we are about fifty simple people who live in a small village together and we know nothing about yoga. Suddenly one of you starts talking about very high things, and you make prophecies and heal people as if by magic. We begin to ask, “What is she doing? What sort of mind does she have? How does she know that? How did she cure that man? What has happened to her?”

Tantra begins from that point. The sudden and spontaneous expressions of such people attracted the enquiring attention of others and they pondered over the question, “How could it happen?” In the beginning they attributed it to gods, spirits, demons, ghosts or devils. They used to say, “Oh, God is doing that”, “A ghost is doing it”, “That dead man is doing it”, or “Astral bodies are responsible for it.” Gradually, they refined this idea and claimed the functioning of ida nadi was responsible. Then they came to know the truth and they explained it thus: “No, she has transformed her mind. She has transformed her prana.”

Next came the questions, “What is transformation? If you are able to predict something or you have telepathic abilities, what has happened to you?” Then they began to discover methods for transforming the brain. In the course of time they developed postures, asanas, pranayamas, mudras, bandhas, mantras, yantras, mandalas, etc. which formed the science of yoga. Tantra is the theory and yoga is the practice.

As far as we know from history, the people of Atlantis knew about yoga and it was later practised throughout South America. There are many large open air museums in South America where there are numerous carvings depicting yoga asanas, all the mudras, all the kriyas and other yogic techniques, and the symbols of tantra. These carvings are very old, having been created long before the Christian era and possibly even before the influx of the Aryans into India.

After the submerging of Atlantis, the yogic culture seems to have suddenly disappeared. Then came the great tidal wave of monotheistic religions. During the period of about two thousand to four thousand years, the four monotheistic religions: Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, came into existence. With the advent of these religions, the sciences were unable to prosper because in the monotheistic religions there is no accommodating spirit. In pantheistic religions there is an accommodating spirit, and that is why the science of yoga survived in India.

39

Is Life on Earth About to End?

People prophesize that Earth will collide with another planet soon and this will mark the end of the Kali yuga. Here Swami Satyananda clarifies the yugas and paints a brighter picture for the future. Taped at Satyanandashram Barcelona, Spain, in May 1980.

There are many new sects springing up all over the world which do not have a very clear concept of the yugas. The age of this Earth is divided into four eras. The first is Satya yuga whose age is 1,728,000 years. Then comes Treta yuga whose age is 1,296,000. Then comes Dwapara yuga whose age is 864,000. Then comes Kali yuga whose age is 432,000 years. Out of that, only 5,088 years have gone by. That means 426,992 years remain.

There is no possibility of Earth colliding with another planet and being destroyed. However, shortly, a few disturbances will occur here and there, just as happened many thousands of years ago when the subcontinent of Atlantis sank into the ocean and the Himalayan mountains came up. Since the beginning of this earth, up to the present day, the geographical map of the world has not been the same. One million years ago there were different islands, different oceans and different continents. Changes have always been occurring and they will certainly continue, but for the destruction of this whole planet you must wait 34 million years.

According to this geological calculation, the life potentiality of this planet is also great. It may continue for even more than 34 million years. Although the distance between Earth and the sun is decreasing and the temperature of the sun is also lessening, it will still take millions of years before the sun becomes sufficiently cold to affect Earth. Even then, Earth has its own internal heat. It has its own atmosphere and oxygen, so therefore the end of the earth is not a matter of a few hundred years. Thus we should not worry about it at all.

Supposing Earth is destroyed tomorrow, why should we worry? There will not be anybody left to grieve, so why have unnecessary fears? Nature created Earth and we have been living here for the last few million years, and it is really quite a nice planet. There are good people also, and as far as I can see, our future is bright. This doesn't mean there will be no difficulties, but the future of mankind will certainly be better because nowadays more and more people are evolving spiritually. Throughout the world people are beginning to think in terms of equality, and there is an ever growing movement towards non-violence. The nations of the world are coming together, and although there are still fights and wars, things are much better than they were in the past.

I am an optimist; I see the silver lining on the horizon, and whenever I hear these horrible predictions, I think their proclaimers are influenced by their own personal cults. In India there are also people who make prophecies like this. They claim the past was good and the future will be bad, but I don't agree. I have studied history and I know about the great wars that have taken place in the last 5,000 years. People were oppressed and suppressed and many were enslaved and tortured. There was no education, no physical freedom, no intellectual freedom and there were no democratic governments. There was only the revolver and the sword. The king was a dictator and the masses had nothing. Now the masses can think. We make the laws, we make the governments and we install the presidents and prime ministers. Things can only improve. There should be democracy in politics, in the fam-

ily, in religion and in yoga also. We shouldn't have to accept any central authority; we should be free to decide things for ourselves.

So we are definitely approaching a brighter future. What was the position of women one hundred years ago? Hopeless! Women were only meant to be one thing, sexual objects, and of course they were babysitters too. That's all. Now do you see the great changes that have occurred? So we have a very bright future and we should see that there are fewer destructions and massacres.

In the course of many decades, the national boundaries will also vanish. You know, in India we have no frontiers with Nepal. Although Nepal is one country and India is another, we can cycle over to Nepal each morning, purchase something and come back. There is no need for a passport or a visa. The same thing should happen throughout the world.

This world belongs to man and man is one race. Africans live in a hot country so they have become very black. Scandinavians are exposed to a cold climate so they have become very white. People living in Mediterranean zones have become brown. Why should colour and language create barriers between man and man? Religions should also not separate people. What I find in Hinduism is the same in Christianity. The only difference is that the churches are made one way and the temples are constructed another way, but this is external. There are no differences in spirit. Hindus believe in one God, Muslims believe in one God and Christians believe in one God. The only difference is that Christians call him God, Hindus call him Ishwara or Deva, Muslims call him Allah and you people call him Dios. So, mankind is one, and because the world belongs to man, we can go anywhere from the North Pole to the South Pole, from Peru to Japan. Let us live as one.

40

Who Dies and What is Death?

Swami Satyananda explains how at the time of death only the gross body dies. The astral and causal bodies depart from the physical body, and in order to fulfil desires and karma they inherit another body. Therefore, death is no more than the destruction of the elements that comprise the gross body. Recorded on 1 September 1980 at the Transmission Seminar, Chamarande, France.

In order to answer this question, we have to analyze the composition of human life. According to the analysis, there are three elements which make up our existence: the gross body, the astral body and the causal body. These are the three types of bodies which are constantly interacting with each other, and the indweller of these three bodies is the self or the *atman*.

The *atman* is known by different names. Some people call it the *jivatma*, individual soul, while others call it the spirit or consciousness. In the ancient scriptures, the *atman* is symbolized in different forms, the most common being light or the image of a bird. Now, this *atman* or self is immortal; it does not die. Death is not associated with the *atman*; it belongs to the physical body.

Now, as I have just explained, this physical body is a composition of three bodies, and of these only the gross body dies. The astral body and the causal body do not die. So therefore what is death? Death is destruction of the elements which comprise the gross body. As you know, the gross body is com-

posed of the five elements of nature: ether, air, fire, water and earth. Permutation and combination of these five elements create the gross body, which is comprised of the brain, heart and lungs, the digestive system, the muscles, nerves, bones, marrow and blood.

This gross body is enlivened by *prana*, the energy which permeates the physical body. Just as a motor pump is operated by electrical energy, in the same way this gross body lives and functions as long as the pranas are flowing through it. These pranas are fivefold as they are concerned with different functions in the gross body. For example, some are responsible for digestion, others are responsible for thinking and so on. As long as these pranas are functioning smoothly, the gross body lives and acts, but when the pranas are dissociated from the body, the body is unable to move at all.

Now, each and every human being is born with certain karmas to fulfil. That is to say we have come under deputation, and once our period of deputation is completed, our body ceases to function. Therefore, death is an exit; it is not the end. Just as you leave one room and enter another, in the same way, the individual self moves from one body to another.

Here there is another important point to note: karmas are endless. A seed germinates and eventually it becomes a tree, the tree produces more seeds and they also become trees. These trees will produce more seeds which will develop into more trees. This is called the chain of karma, and as you can imagine, it is a very long chain.

Therefore, death is only an exit. When the physical body dies, the astral body and the causal body leave the physical body together, along with the individual soul, or what you might call your individuality. Then, in order to fulfil your desires and karma, they inherit another body.

41

What are Mudras?

This simple and precise explanation of mudras was given by Swami Satyananda in Zinal, Switzerland, in September 1979.

Mudras are psychic, emotional, devotional and aesthetic attitudes. There are many mudras and they have come to mean different things according to usage and the level of understanding of the people. In India, mudras occupy an important place in the arts as well as the spiritual sciences. In Bharata Natyam we have the dance mudras; this is one aspect. In the bhakti cults we have the devotional mudras; this is another aspect. Then there are the mudras for meditation which are another aspect still. We also have the yogic mudras such as vipareeta karani mudra, khechari mudra, yoga mudra, shambhavi mudra, nasikagra mudra and many others.

Mudras appear to be physical gestures or positions made with the hands, eyes or the whole body. But yogis have experienced mudras as attitudes of energy flow which are intended to link the individual pranic force with the universal or cosmic force.

In tantra there is an important set of meditation mudras practised with the hands. Perhaps the best known of these is chin mudra. This is practised with the palms up, index finger at the root of the thumb, and the other three fingers outstretched together.

Chin mudra is the symbol of spiritual life. The three outstretched fingers represent the three *gunas* or qualities of nature; *sattva*, equilibrium, *rajas*, dynamism, and *tamas*, inertia. With the help of these three, nature is able to create the whole universe. In spiritual life, you must separate yourself from the three *gunas*. The index finger represents individual consciousness or *jivatma*. The thumb is the symbol of universal consciousness, *Brahma* or *paramatma*. When you join your individual consciousness with the absolute consciousness, keeping it aloof from the three *gunas*, that is the symbol of spiritual life.

This is a symbolic explanation, but there is another explanation in terms of energy movement within the body. Experiments with Kirlian photography have shown that the fingers give out flares of energy. If the fingers touch the thumb, a circuit is produced which allows energy that would normally be dissipated to travel back into the body and up to the brain. The hand is directly connected to a large proportion of the brain's cortex. Therefore, the energy circuit created between the thumb and index finger has a powerful effect on the brain. Using both hands has the effect of bringing both hemispheres under conscious control.

Another hand mudra, called jnana mudra, is exactly like chin mudra, except that the palms face downwards and rest on the knees. Then there is yoni mudra in which you fix forefinger with forefinger, thumb with thumb, and interlock the other three fingers. This mudra is the symbol of shakti. Another is pranam mudra, the attitude of greeting or supplication, in which the palms are placed together at the heart level.

There is another important mudra which yogis practise before meditation in order to balance the flow of breath. Often during meditation, the mind is out of gear and you don't know the reason why. This is usually due to an imbalance in the flow of the breath. When the right nostril is flowing, the mind plays games. This is because the right nostril is connected with the left hemisphere of the brain, which is the centre of rajo guna, dynamism. Sometimes we feel very relaxed and composed as though we had taken a tranquillizer. The mind

refuses to act and goes to sleep. This is not a good condition either. It occurs when the left nostril is flowing. The left nostril is connected with the right hemisphere of the brain, which is the centre of *tamo guna*, inertia.

Now, how do we balance it? This is very important to know. If you find that the right nostril is flowing, press the *yoga danda* (staff) or your left hand into the right armpit. Within a few minutes the left nostril will be clear. Likewise, if the left nostril is flowing, press the staff or the right hand into the left armpit. Within a few minutes the right nostril will be flowing. This mudra can also be practised by pressing both armpits at the same time and meditating. This helps in creating a smooth balance between the *ida* and *pingala* energy systems.

When both nostrils flow equally, the energy enters into *sushumna nadi*. Then meditation becomes a smooth affair and you have fewer problems with yourself. It is possible to create this situation through *pranayama* also, but it often takes much time.

Along with the mudras which affect the energy circuits, we have other mudras which directly stimulate the chakras. In *shambhavi mudra*, for example, the energy is concentrated at *bhrumadhya*, the trigger point for *ajna chakra*. *Nasikagra mudra* focuses energy at the nose tip. This stimulates certain nerves which govern the sense of smell, thereby awakening *mooladhara chakra*, which is associated with this faculty.

Vipareeta karani mudra, the half shoulder stand posture of *hatha yoga* and *kriya yoga*, reverses the downward flow of energy. In the scriptures it is clearly stated that the moon (*bindu*) secretes nectar and the sun (*manipura*) consumes it. This leads to degeneration, decay and death. In *vipareeta karani mudra*, this downward process is reversed and the energy which is normally lost in external affairs is sucked back up to the higher centres in the brain.

So in *yoga* and *tantra*, *mudra* means 'the attitude of energy flow'. But it is not enough to know this intellectually, you have to practise mudras in order to experience them for yourself. An ounce of practice is better than tons of theory.

42

Harmonizing Ida and Pingala Nadis

Swami Satyananda gives a very clear description of the three major nadis in the human body. He also explains how all diseases are related to malfunctioning in ida or pingala nadi and he recommends a proper balance between hatha yoga and raja yoga when dealing with the problems of health. Taped at Sivanandashram, Paris, France, on 16 May 1980.

Just as electrical wires conduct a flow of electrical energy, in this physical body there is also a flow of energy which is conducted by the nadis. In this energy system there is vital energy, known as *prana*, and mental energy, known as *manas*. These energies flow through two important nadis, ida and pingala. These two nadis emanate from mooladhara chakra and flow within the framework of the spinal column to their point of termination in ajna chakra. In the centre of the spinal column there is a third nadi called sushumna, which flows from mooladhara up to ajna chakra, then on to sahasrara. But in most people it is a dormant flow; there is no activity or awakening.

So we have three flows, known as ida, pingala and sushumna. We call them manas, prana and atma, or in the language of modern science, the parasympathetic, sympathetic and central nervous systems respectively. *Pingala nadi* is on the right side and it supplies life and prana to all the organs of the body. *Ida nadi* is on the left side and it supplies mental

energy to all parts of the body. It is by this force that man is aware of time, space and object. *Sushumna*, the central nadi, conducts the spiritual energy. It transcends the other two forces.

At present, because *sushumna* is dormant, *ida* and *pingala* are supplying energy to the whole physical body. The bodily organs and systems are directly connected with *ida* and *pingala*. In between the points where they emanate and terminate (*mooladhara* and *ajna* chakras) there are four junctions. One junction, known as *swadhisthana* chakra, is in the sacral plexus, the second, *manipura* chakra, is in the solar plexus, the third, *anahata* chakra, is in the cardiac plexus and the fourth one, *vishuddhi* chakra, is in the cervical plexus. Through these four junctions the pranic and mental energies branch off to the rest of the body. If the energy flows well, but the junctions do not function properly, then the energy cannot be circulated throughout the body. Therefore, through the practices of yoga, *ida* and *pingala* should be purified and the four junctions should be put into proper working order.

Now, what you have to do is awaken *sushumna nadi*. If *sushumna* is active, meditation occurs by itself. If you want to bring light to your room, you must make electrical connections. In the same way, activation of *sushumna* must take place before the awakening of *kundalini*. When *kundalini* wakes up, passes through *sushumna*, and joins *ida* and *pingala* in *ajna* chakra, the lower form of energy is withdrawn. The small generators are switched off and the greater energy begins to flow through these nadis, awakening the different zones in the brain and also supplying energy to the whole physical body.

Right now, every single thing we do is on account of *ida* and *pingala* interacting with each other. From dawn to dusk and from dusk to dawn, we are nothing but a manifestation of the interaction of these two forces. When there is disharmony between *ida* and *pingala*, ill health invariably results. If there is a disturbance in the pranic force, physical diseases originate. If there is turbulence in the mental force, psychological diseases originate. However, you must remember that

disturbances never occur only in prana or only in manas. If the prana is deranged, manas will then be affected and if manas is in disorder, prana will suffer the consequences. Therefore, no disease is purely physical or purely psychological; every disease is a combination of psychic and somatic factors.

All disease can be classified as either psychosomatic or somatopsychic. When prana is disturbed and manas is consequently affected, the disease which results will be somatopsychic. When manas is affected and consequently prana, then the disease which originates will be psychosomatic.

Now, you must understand that it is very important for prana and manas to be brought into a state of balance, as they dominate the two hemispheres of the brain. Prana dominates over the left hemisphere and manas dominates over the right. As prana and manas always function alternately, so do the two hemispheres of the brain. They never function simultaneously. If prana and manas can be made to function in unison, then awakening will occur in sushumna nadi.

Due to the very nature of our modern culture and lifestyle, prana and manas are both in a state of turbulence. Our thoughts, emotions and desires disturb the manas, and the impure air and food, the flora and fauna and our whole surrounding ecology affect the prana. Therefore, it is essential that we create a steady mental outlook so we will not be affected by psychological disturbances.

According to Vedanta, Samkhya philosophy and Nyaya Vedanta, the mind is a composition of twenty-four elements; it is not a homogeneous entity. In order to overcome the mind you will have to investigate it thoroughly. This can be done primarily with the help of antar mouna. With a little examination, you will find that ultimately, the mind is the root of all feelings and effects in life. And if you can harmonize the mind, you can balance out all disturbances. Then you will never be tortured by fear, anxiety and other such things; you will remain cool and calm under all circumstances.

Now, just as the mind is a composition, so is prana. It is composed of five main principles. In this physical body the

life force is divided into prana, apana, udana, samana and vyana, according to its functions in the different areas of the body. Of these five types of prana, prana and apana are considered the most important and powerful. When there is union or harmony between prana and apana, the higher pranas explode. This is the concept of health in yoga.

Yoga does not say that all diseases are psychological or that they are all physical. It says that all diseases have their origin in both the physical and the mental bodies. As such, when dealing with the problems of health, there should be a proper balance between hatha yoga and raja yoga.



43

Trataka

Swami Satyananda speaks on the advanced practices of trataka, in which mandalas are utilized to awaken the chakras. Recorded at the Zinal Conference in September 1980.

In yoga and in the Sufi tradition, there is a very powerful and important practice known as trataka. In case you don't know, Sufism is a philosophic yogic sect which emanates from the Islamic religion. For many centuries there has been an interaction between the yogis and the Sufis, and just as the yogis talk about kundalini, the chakras and concentration techniques, so do the Sufis.

Trataka means steadily gazing at an object. If you want to practise meditation on a mandala, then you have to proceed through the practice of trataka. Place the mandala in front of your eyes. Look at it with a steady gaze for a few minutes. Do not blink or flicker your eyelids. Then remove your gaze from the mandala, either by raising your eyes a little above it, or by lowering your gaze to the floor. The background should be white. Then, when you remove your gaze from the mandala, you will immediately see the counter-image of the mandala on the white background. The counter-image will only last for a very short time, say half a second to a second, but with practice you will be able to extend this period of visualization. Once the image fades, repeat the practice.

If you have difficulty in visualizing the counter-image, you should try a different technique of *trataka*. On a sunny day, sit outside with your back toward the sun. Make yourself comfortable in a meditative posture and develop absolute steadiness of the body. There should be no movement at all, become like a statue. Practise *trataka* on the neck of your shadow and concentrate on this point for a few minutes. Then, without moving, raise your eyes and look at the sky. You will find a very big counter-image of your shadow. Keep looking at that counter-image until it fades away. Return to the practice and repeat the process again.

Now, if you are practising *trataka* on a mandala, the mandala should be in bright light. If the light is focused on the mandala, and the sides are dark, then the counter-image will be marvellous. When you have practised this for a long time and have perfected it, the counter-image will look as real as the mandala.

Once you have achieved success in visualizing the mandala against the white background with eyes open, start trying to visualize the mandala with the eyes closed. Practise *trataka* in the same way, but instead of raising or lowering the gaze from mandala, close the eyes and try to see the counter-image within. When you visualize the counter-image with the closed eyes, this is known as *dharana*, and this practice leads to meditation. Of course, the technique used for visualizing the mandala can also be applied to *yantra*.

Now, there is a more advanced technique. Once you are able to visualize the counter-image within you, with eyes closed, try to superimpose that image on one of the chakras or psychic centres. Choose one mandala for yourself and practise and perfect that. Then impose it on a chakra, then on another chakra. In the same manner, transfer it to each of the other chakras in turn. Or you can do it another way. Take the mandala of *mooladhara* chakra. Perfect this and impose it on *mooladhara* chakra. When you have succeeded, take the mandala of *swadhisthana* chakra. Then superimpose that on *swadhisthana*. Similarly, go on

meditating on the individual mandalas of every chakra, one after the other.

Of course, this will take time, but it is a very interesting practice. It will keep you occupied for at least five years because what I have spoken about in five minutes will take you five years to perfect. That is the problem in yoga, what you learn about yoga in one minute takes years to experience.

Now, if you want to practise mandala meditation on mooladhara chakra, first you have to practise trataka on the mandala with eyes open, against a white background. Make the counter-image very clear and distinct, then start practising with the eyes closed and visualize the mandala clearly inside you. Then superimpose the image on your mooladhara chakra. Can you imagine how much time it will take? It is a very rewarding practice which can occupy years and years of your life.



44

Vasanas and Samskaras

Here Swami Satyananda defines vasanas and samskaras and explains how they are mutually related. Taped at the Zinal Conference, Switzerland, in September 1980.

Vasanas are hidden desires. In the human mind, there are various levels of desires. Hunger is one desire and, similarly, there are other desires such as sleep, to have more money and property, to have a husband or wife, children, friends and relatives, to have love and affection. These are called desires.

There are desires that are on the upper mental plane. They are the ordinary and simple desires which we are aware of. But at the base there are hidden desires which sometimes project themselves directly or, more frequently, indirectly. These hidden desires are known as *vasanas*. When you suppress your desires, the hidden desires do not dare to come up. They try to express themselves or channel themselves by some other means.

So, suppression of desires strengthens the hidden desires. These hidden desires project themselves in dreams, in visions or during *pratyahara*, and they keep manifesting at different stages of meditation. Even just before the point of illumination, these hidden desires keep on projecting or exhausting themselves.

Samskaras are the residues of experiences, just as seeds are the residues of flowers. In modern psychology *samskaras* are

known as archetypes. Let me explain them. In the soil there is potentiality. During summer the soil is generally dry and grass seldom grows, but the moment it begins to rain, grass springs up everywhere. How could this happen? There must be grass seeds in the soil. Samskaras were there, and from the samskaras the grass grew.

Samskaras are transformed symbols of each and every experience. Just as your tape recorder is recording everything I am saying, and side by side it is also registering other sounds that are taking place within its range, in the same way, there is a non-stop recording of consciousness going on in the human mind. It registers every experience of touch, taste, sound, form and smell. When you sleep, the process of registration continues. Even if you are under chloroform in the hospital, it still goes on. It is only when the person dies and the subtle body leaves this body that the registration stops.

The experiences which are registered are finally transferred to another body. First, they are in the gross mind. If you don't use them again, they are transferred to the subconscious body. And when they are not used even there, they are transferred to the causal body. Each and every experience is indelible. You may have a very insignificant experience which you have not even noticed, but it will have had an exposure in your consciousness.

For example, a man asked a psychologist why he often dreamed of eggs even though he never thought about them. Finally, the psychologist found out that when the man used to travel from his home to the office, he always drove through a street in which on the right hand side there was a shop which advertised that it sold eggs. The man had nothing to do with the shop, but it must have been at the angle of his perception. Because the camera of the mind is working all the time, and filming each and every thing that comes into its vision, he dreamed about eggs.

So, experiences are transformed into samskaras or archetypes which are stored in the mind. When they are transferred to the causal body, you cannot experience them exactly as

you saw them. You experience them in a symbolic form. They are expressed in dreams, through animal symbolism, fear, or death symbolism and so many things, and it is usually very difficult to relate those symbols to the actual experiences they represent.

According to Samkhya and Vedanta in general, and Hindu philosophy in particular, samskara is the ultimate form of human experience. All actions are influenced by samskaras. All pain and all happiness is due to samskaras and all good and bad actions are also due to samskaras. Furthermore, it is due to samskaras that a man is under the state of hypnosis called maya.

Our samskaras are so many that it is not possible to pick them up one by one. That is why, in the *Bhagavad Gita*, it is stated clearly, “Just as the fire consumes all the firewood, in the same way, when you develop *jnana* or higher awareness, then all forms of samskaras are destroyed.” You have to destroy all your samskaras at the one time.

In the system of yoga it is said that in order to consume the samskaras, you have to put a stop to the vasanas. Otherwise you will continue to supply more and more. Vasanas add to samskaras, and in order to eliminate the samskaras you will have to work very hard. It is not easy. Theoretically, we can talk a lot about it, but as long as you have vasanas, how can you eliminate samskaras? And as long as you have samskaras, how can you eliminate vasanas? They are mutually helping each other.

45

Breaking the Bond

Further to Sri Swamiji's talk on vasanas and samskaras, he was asked how it is possible to escape the vicious circle of vasanas and samskaras. Here, Sri Swamiji's advice is that we accept our destiny and karma and develop the right attitude towards pain and pleasure. Taped at the Zinal Conference, Switzerland, in September 1980.

For thousands of years every wise man has thought about this subject. All the great prophets and seers have been trying to free man from these twin rakshasas. They have described different methods, but these have helped only a few people. There has not been a formula which has freed the masses.

Now, we come to an important point. It is not possible for all people to overcome karma because we are all at different points on the scale of evolution. We may look alike and even think alike, we may belong to the same country, race, tribe or religion, but still our spirits are at different levels. We all have a long voyage ahead of us and no two people are at one point. Everybody is moving, but nowhere will you find two people walking abreast. It is only when you reach the journey's end that you are released. Everyone cannot attain liberation at the same moment.

What we have to do is sublimate the vasanas. The hidden desires must be channelled and the samskaras must be faced bravely. We cannot change our destiny, so we have to accept it whether we think it is good or bad. If it is a positive destiny,

we should face it with humility and prayers. If it is negative, we have to face it with forbearance and accept it as the will of God. That will reduce the rigour of samskaras. Remember that destiny is indispensable and everybody has to face it, whether they are saints or sinners, householders or sannyasins.

Birth is destiny, life is destiny and death is destiny. Rebirth is also destiny. You can't get out of this circle. But of course you can maintain what we call viveka, an attitude of jnana.

Now, negative destiny and positive destiny will come and go like day and night. Negative destiny is *dukha*, pain; positive destiny is *sukha*, pleasure. When pleasure comes to us, we become puffed up. We are intoxicated and we think this experience will never come to an end. We do not realize that positive destiny is subject to change.

During the periods of positive destiny or *sukha*, we should become very humble in our attitude. We should also be very sensitive during these periods because the day will pass and the night will come. Throughout the periods of *sukha*, we should live as though we were in *dukha*. Only then can we face the negative destiny.

However, things usually happen differently. During negative destiny or *dukha*, we are broken completely. We curse God and humanity, we curse nature and we curse ourselves. We say, "Why have you punished me? What did I do to deserve this? Why is God so cruel?" And we always pray, "God, please put an end to this. I can't take any more."

When we have positive destiny, we become proud and say, "Yes, I built up this business. I brought this car from West Germany myself. Through hard work, skill and good judgement, I built this beautiful house with my own hands." God is not in the picture. During the times of *dukha*, God is always in the picture, but during *sukha* he is never present. 'I' is always the chief figure.

What's more, whenever we pass into a phase of *sukha*, we are immediately changed. Within a few days we begin to talk differently, our voices are lighter, our thoughts become positive and our conversations are cheerful. We completely

forget we had a dark night. Therefore, to deal with karma, samskaras and vasanas, we must be very careful in maintaining the correct attitude towards our destiny.



46

Evolutionary Role of Karma

Swami Satyananda explains how karma should be accepted and transformed into karma yoga in order to set the process of self-enlightenment into motion. Recorded at the Festival of Health held in Bogota, Colombia, in October 1980.

You may practise raja, hatha, kundalini, mantra and bhakti yoga, but if you underestimate karma yoga, then all these yogas can lead you to a dissipated and dispersed state of mind. Every person who is practising yoga should transform his daily activities through the philosophy of karma yoga. The purpose of your daily work should become spiritual, or rather you should realize nature's spiritual purpose behind your karma. If you renounce your karma, your mind will not find a basis for evolution.

Before you can realize the role of karma yoga in relation to spiritual evolution, you must first understand that the purpose of karma yoga is to create a stable base for the mind. In meditation the mind has to remain constantly on one object without any interception of another idea. But if you keep on practising this without having attained the state of sattwa, without having purified the mind, you will only fall back into a tamasic state. In order to prevent this, the practice of karma yoga was designed by nature for everyone, because we all have ambitions, desires and passions.

If you don't have any desire, you definitely will not make any karma. If desire were to be eliminated, then man's psycho-spiritual evolution would come to a halt. Therefore, desires must not be curbed. You should either fulfil them completely or else realize their uselessness.

By curbing your desires, you are killing your opportunity to act. Say you have a desire to have a child. To fulfil this you need to have a wife or husband, a home, a job, shop or business, and then so many things follow. These things are what keep this untrained mind busy all the time. This is how karma keeps the devil beat. Mind is a great force, a supramental force, and if this force is not properly utilized, it will feed the wrong centres in the mental personality and perhaps become destructive. Therefore, nature has created karma.

In the *Bhagavad Gita* it says that every action produces threefold reactions: desire, aversion and a mixture of both. If you receive something which you want very much, that makes you happy. However, if you receive something which you don't want, that makes you very unhappy. If you receive something which you like and dislike, you will be both happy and unhappy. When the mind is affected by negative reactions, it often becomes depressed or deranged, thereby allowing such diseases as asthma, cancer, hypertension or diabetes to take hold. At these times one may even commit suicide or divorce his wife. Anything can happen because the karma affects the personality and the behaviour. So we have to find a way of creating karma whereby the consequences do not affect us. That path is known as karma yoga.

In the pursuit of our day-to-day lives, our attitudes towards karma have become purely materialistic. Every time we think about spiritual life, we think in terms of renouncing karma. In the ashram also, if you ask anyone to do some work, they invariably refuse on the basis that all actions are maya, and by this man is bound. But it is not true; karma can never be a cause for bondage. Nature has created karma as a scheme for man to evolve and to know the behaviour and deeper stages of the mind, and through the mind to achieve spiritual awareness.

Mind and spiritual awareness are not two different things. At one stage there is milk, at another stage the milk becomes curd, at a third stage the curd is churned into butter, at the fourth stage it is clarified into ghee, and finally at the fifth stage it becomes part of your curry. In the same way, at one stage there is the gross body, at another stage the vasanas or passions, at the third stage the psychic experiences, and at the fourth stage the supreme reality.

Atma, or the supreme reality, manifests itself at different stages. The mind is one of these stages and you cannot obliterate the mind. You can only purify the mind and remove the dross, the *samskaras*. Then, at the very nucleus or basis of the mind, *atma*, or *chaitanya*, will be revealed. Therefore, *karma yoga* is any action which is done with higher awareness, for the sake of the work, because work keeps the mind and body occupied. Even if the work does not pay you in terms of money, still you do it.

In the same way, if you, as householders, try to transform your daily karma into karma yoga, then first of all you have to accept the role of karma in spiritual evolution. Then whatever you do you will feel grace and bliss in every work.

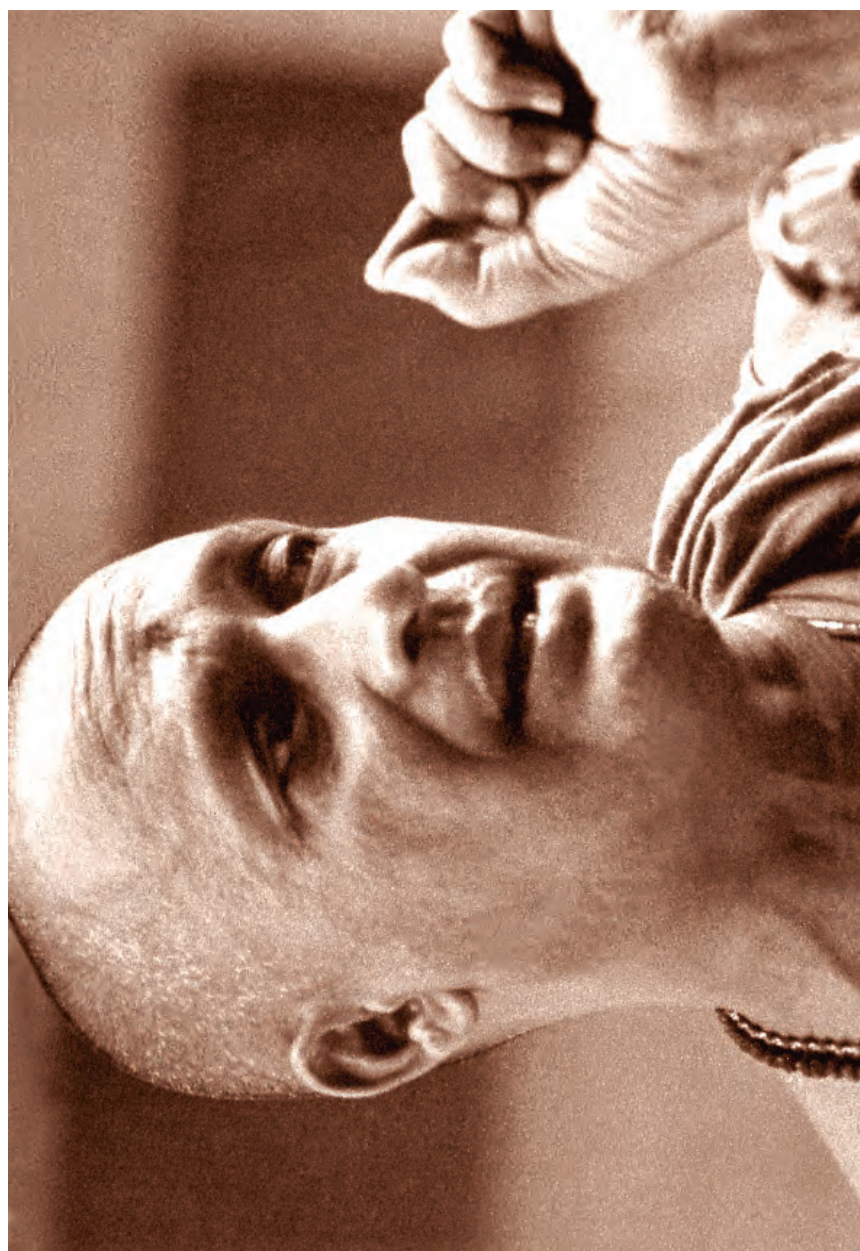
First of all you must remember that it is not meditation which is the beginning of yoga; it is the training of this undisciplined, uneducated, powerful mind, which flows like a river in full spate. This mind cannot be controlled at different points; it has to be educated. Education is most important and this education is provided to the mind through karma. This means that everything you do, right or wrong, is karma, and that karma can be transmuted into karma yoga provided there is enlightenment in you.

Why are you bored with your work? It is due to your attitude. If the attitude is correct, you can go on doing the same work for fifty years. When you consider your work as a duty, a way of serving others, it never becomes dull. It is only when you think of it in terms of your own development or pleasure that work becomes intolerable and monotonous.

It is actually far easier and more motivating to work for others than for yourself. This is the secret of karma yoga which few understand and are able to apply. This is the difference between karma and karma yoga. You create karma when you act with yourself in mind, with your personal desires and problems as a motivation. When you act, not for yourselves but as a service, an offering to others, the mind is freed and you experience the benefits of karma yoga.

Actually, karma yoga can be practised anywhere at any time. It is not necessary to live in an ashram to practise it. But few understand the basic principle behind it and the necessity of it being performed with the correct attitude. In the ashram you learn how to practise karma yoga and this is very important. Otherwise, you may spend your whole life working for yourself and increasing your suffering, rather than working for others and ending your suffering along with theirs.

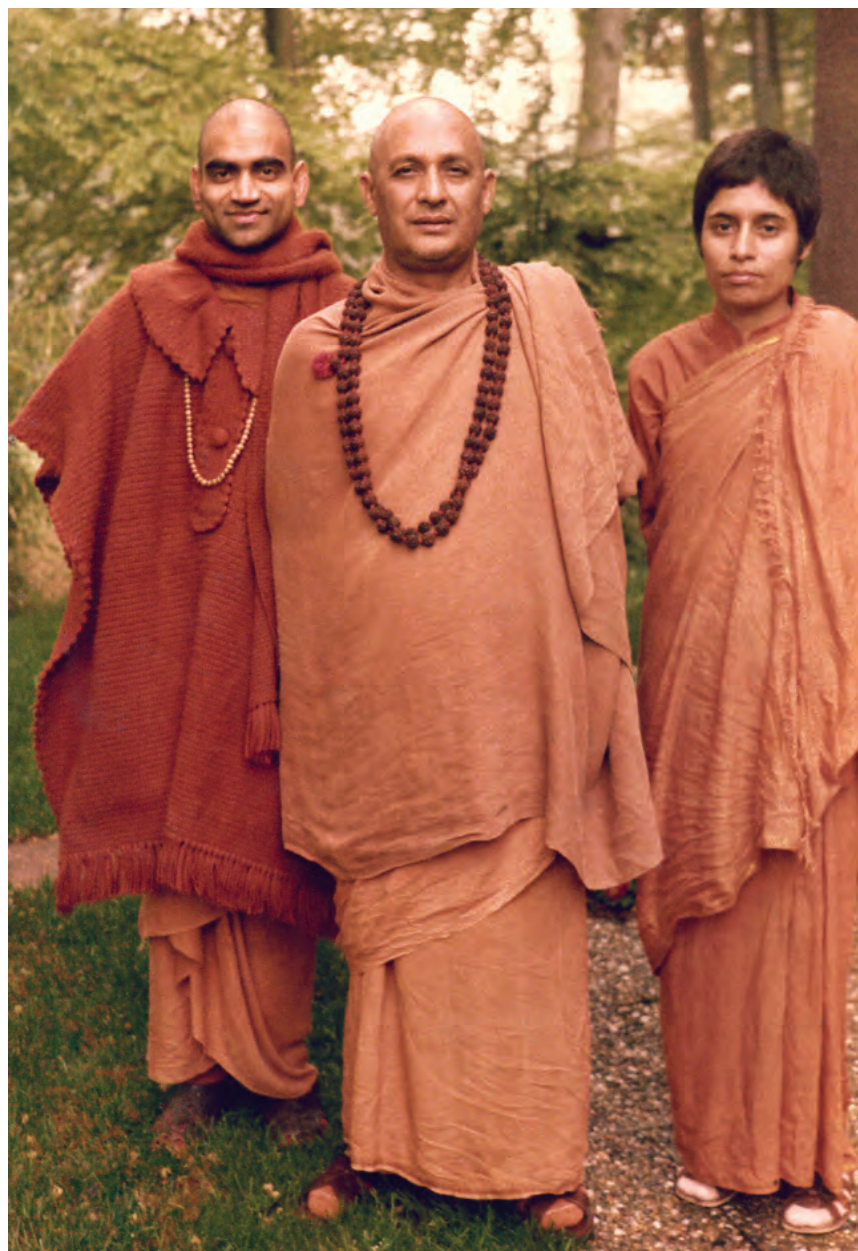
So karma yoga is a necessary part of life. It is as necessary as eating, talking or walking. For you must go on creating karma as long as you are alive. You cannot live without action. Therefore, let your actions be performed as a service to the evolution of all beings and you will enjoy a life of utter freedom, simplicity and bliss. All your needs will be bestowed on you as if blessings from God. You will never be lonely or suffer any ills. When the mind is at peace with itself, the body attains health. People are drawn to such a person like bees to nectar. It is impossible to keep them away.

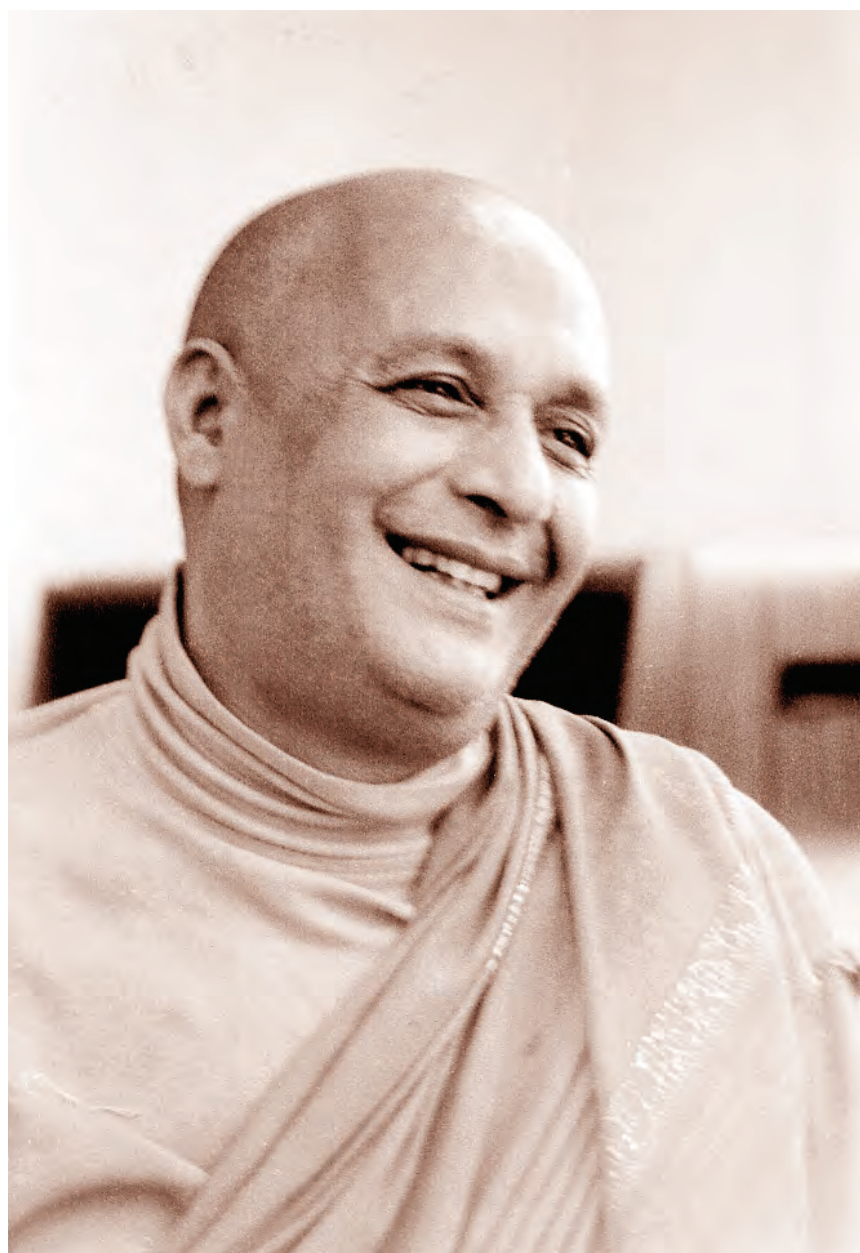




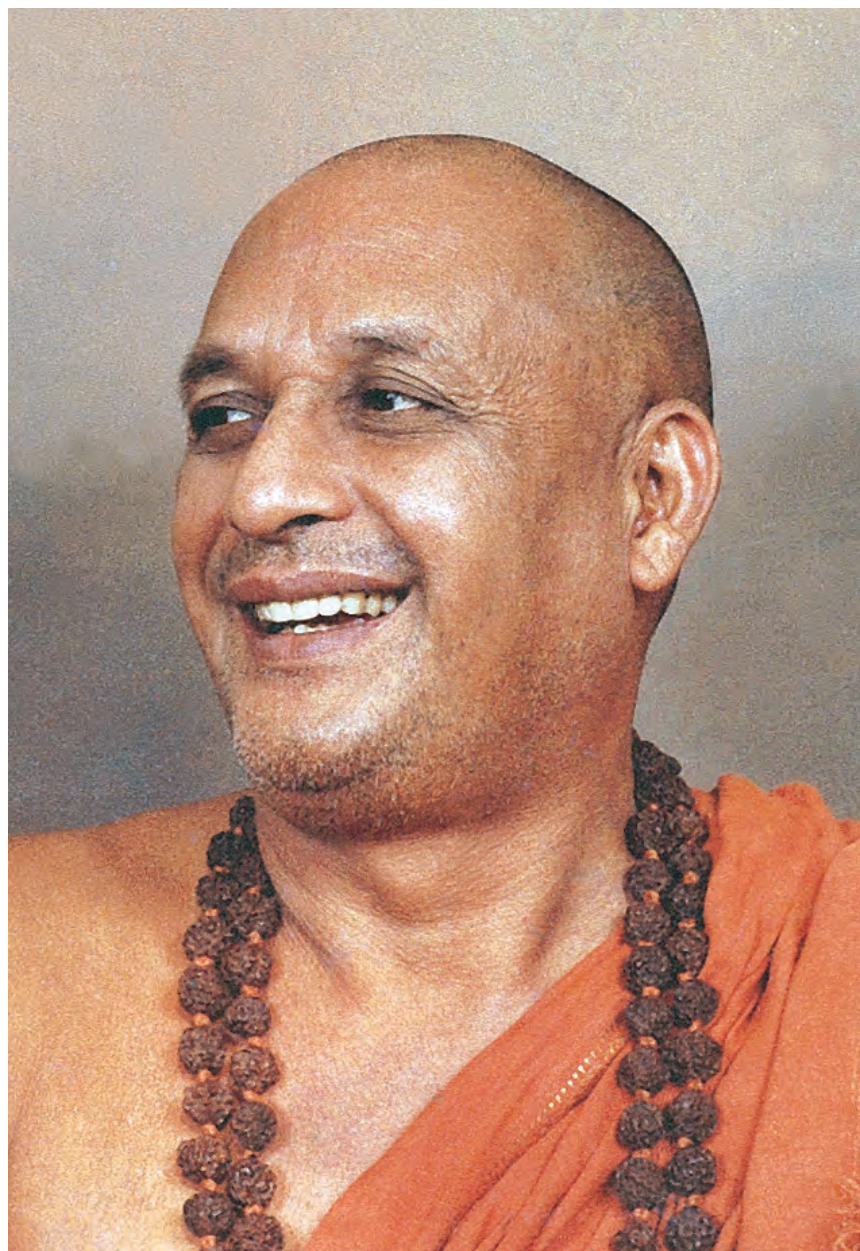












Our Silent Supporters

During a satsang Swami Satyananda gave to a group of kriya yoga students from Greece, he was asked to explain how sannyasins who retire to the Himalayas are contributing to society and the evolution of mankind. The answer is both unique and inspiring. Taped at Bihar School of Yoga, Munger, on 20 January 1981.

In every science there are dedicated souls who surrender their lives to the perfection of their science. It is not necessary for everybody to involve himself in society. If everybody did only that, then the great work of research and science would be obstructed.

The yogis retire into seclusion for a period of time not only to perfect themselves, but to experience their souls. The knowledge they have does not just come from books, but from what they have experienced themselves. Some renunciates come out of their seclusion in order to relate their experiences to others, whereas many remain there, merged in meditation. They develop cosmic awareness and become generators of cosmic radiations or emissions which they send out to different parts of the universe. These divine souls work with a higher purpose, just like the scientists who work in their labs with such total dedication to their research that they are often unmindful as to what is happening to their wives and families.

Whereas most people have to live in society because they need other people, there is a particular type of person who

has no inclination to be a part of society or to mix with others. We call these people 'lonely souls', and there have been quite a number of them in history. They are the ones who come to the world with a higher purpose to fulfil and with awareness of a particular form of experience. Such people retire from the world either for a short time or for all time, and through their penance they discover the gold mines.

You must remember that man does not survive on food and clothing alone. Although we have to have them, they are not our prime needs. Sannyasins are aware of this. They only wear clothes because society demands it. However, most people dress in order to impress others and because they believe clothes are a necessity. Few have realized that the greatest need of man is perfection of his mind.

Man is obviously searching for something. The fact that he is constantly pursuing sensual pleasures and expressing dissatisfaction indicates that he is seeking something more. Why do you think he has so many vices? And why do you think he sees incompleteness everywhere? I am searching for a diamond but I don't know it. I come across various pebbles and am attracted to them. I pick them up and keep them with me for some time. Then I throw them away because I don't need them anymore. It is only after some time that my guru tells me, "Hey, you have been searching for the diamond." Then I think, "Oh yes, I was looking for the diamond. That's why I was throwing all those pebbles away."

Why do you think a good wife or husband does not satisfy you? Why is it that so much money doesn't give you a sense of security? Why, with all the things that you have in life, do you remain unsatisfied? It's not a mistake with life. It is because the purpose of your search is not there. Those who ask themselves these types of questions are the ones who retire from the world, to the Himalayas if possible.

Life in the Himalayan regions is extremely difficult. Many people who go there to live can't manage it and they have to come back. Even if they don't want to leave, they become very ill and are compelled to go. Only the strongest bodies

and minds survive there, and they can endure it month after month, year after year and decade after decade.

Many years ago, when I went to Gangotri, I met a swami there whose name was Swami Krishnashram. He was well over 129 years of age, and for the last one hundred years he had not spoken to anyone. Now, the same question came to my mind. What is his place in human evolution? I did not answer the question because I thought I was not capable of it. Years rolled by and ultimately I came to know about the pollution of the mental and spiritual universe.

You talk about the pollution of the external universe by diesel fumes and smoke, but have you considered the corruption of the mental universe of man? Who is going to purify that? The external ecology of the atmosphere can be maintained by growing more trees and reducing industrial wastes and factories. But how are you going to maintain the internal ecology of mankind? Is not the mind of man impure now? Is it not stinking? You have to agree with me that there must be some means of purifying the internal space of man.

Now this is exactly what the yogis and renunciates are doing. Whereas some of them may be neglecting their wives and children in favour of this greater work, others will not have a wife, home or property. These dedicated souls may not be involved in social or charity work, they may not be helping in hospitals, mental asylums or relief work, but they are the most powerful people, who are anonymously making the greatest contributions to society. They have been giving continuous support to man's consciousness, not only in their own country but all over the world.

When you look at a building, you only see its outermost structure. Do you ever see its foundations? The yogis and renunciates are the foundations and you are the structures. We can see your beauty and your contributions, but we cannot see how firmly you are supported.

48

Message for the Swamis

Swami Satyananda speaks on the renunciation and duty of sannyasin disciples. Recorded during the International Festival for Yoga and Health held in Bogota, Colombia, in October 1980.

As sannyasins, you are dedicated to the dissemination and propagation of yoga, irrespective of caste, colour, creed, religion and politics. This is a very difficult task; it is easy to say, but hard to do. You will have to leave your personal life behind, even as a caterpillar breaks out of the cocoon and transforms itself into a grand butterfly, wafting through the air freely. In the same way, you will have to understand that a sannyasin has no personal life, no personal relationships, no personal love or hatred, no private property or assets, no personal religion or politics.

We have chosen to wear this robe not for our salvation, emancipation or the growth of our spirit, but in the language of Buddha, “To keep on moving as a mendicant for the good of many, for the happiness of many, for the welfare of all human beings.” For you there are no frontiers, no continents, no differences. You may get disciples, but you are not a guru. You may get money, but that is not for you. You may get a home, an ashram or a school, but that is not your property. You work not for the fulfilment of ego, nor the accomplishment of name and fame, but because you are the one who can dedicate yourself completely. You are the full-time servant of

mankind. The one duty that is left upon you is to promote yoga, to teach yoga, to talk yoga.

Day by day, let this cloak of avidya fall away and the dross of ignorance be cleansed from your personality. The pure spirit must shine through in this frame. For you there is no wife, son, sister or mother. For you there is nothing that could be called mine. For you there is only one thing – yoga: yoga for health, yoga for mental peace, yoga for spiritual illumination, yoga for mankind. Your heart must be filled with compassion for all living beings, because everybody is your sister and brother; everybody is your relative, and as long as these people do not understand how to live the life of yoga, your sannyasa is not complete.

I am not a guru. I am dedicated to the promotion of yoga because I am under an instruction, and the moment that work is finished I will not be with you. For me greatness is of no consequence and name has no relevance, because many great people have come and gone. Sweeping time has removed them from history. There are millions and millions of great people in history. I may be one among them, but who is going to care for my name? The one satisfaction that I'll get at the time of departing from this body is that I have finished this job, and the job of a sannyasin is just four letters – YOGA.



49

Free Your Mind

Swami Satyananda discusses what he expects from his disciples. Recorded in a satsang given at Satyananda Ashram Mangrove Mountain, Australia, on 13 January 1980.

When the relationship between guru and disciple is established, the only thing that is expected of the disciple is that he free his mind. Making the mind free is difficult to explain. The mind is always engaged on either the sensory, mental, emotional or deeper planes, and often we don't even know what holds our mind. Every thought of the past, present or future, every association with pleasant and unpleasant, with a person or an object, should be separated from the mind. None of these things should hold our awareness. When the mind becomes free from these involvements, then it expresses itself in a very powerful force in the form of an experience, vision, light or revelation. This is precisely what I expect from my disciples.

Two thousand years ago, when the disciples of Christ carried his teachings from continent to continent, who were they? They were the people with a free mind, and that is why they could illumine the minds of people and distribute healing energy to the sick. And this is what I expect from you.

You may be able to work in the ashram or outside as a very good yoga teacher, but this is a very gross and simple quality of a disciple. There will always be better teachers than you,

just as many people have grown to be better teachers than me. They have better power of expression, and they can speak and sing better than I can.

If you are not learned, I don't care. If you have not read spiritual books, I don't mind. Even if you do not have a good power of expression, it doesn't matter. You have a mind, and you have a body and senses, and you have knowledge of the objects of pleasure and pain. And from time to time you will be drawn to pleasant things and you will withdraw from unpleasant things. This does not matter, it is the natural and habitual behaviour of the mind, body and senses. However, it should not arrest the free expression of the mind.

The mind should remain free whether you live amidst pleasure or pain, wealth or poverty, young people or old. The mind must not identify itself with the external circumstances and think, "I am poor," "I am rich," "I am in pain," or "I am very unfortunate." As sannyasins, we live a life of poverty by choice. Why? Because our minds must be free. Wealth, name, fame, passion, all these things hold down this great energy of man.

The disciples, particularly the younger sannyasins, should understand that they have not undertaken this particular way of life just to represent a particular sect or order. We are trying to simplify our lives on the physical, mental and emotional planes so the mind will remain free. If we can keep the mind free, awakening will take place automatically, even without any sadhana. This is a simple and scientific principle.

You know what happens in physics? You take matter and you disintegrate it. In the beginning it is a composition of many elements, but when you separate those elements from the matter, what remains is energy. Nowadays, they call this nuclear energy. Energy is always present in matter, but it is dormant and invisible. If you take a handful of uranium or plutonium, you can't see anything but a handful of sand. You cannot see or perceive it, but there is energy hidden in the gross matter. Just as a scientist removes those elements, one

by one, and finally liberates energy, in the same way, when you free the mind from the *tattwas* or elements, then it becomes a power.

Every disciple must awaken this energy, and then move amongst the people, giving them whatever help they need, whether it is healing, peace of mind or spiritual illumination. Now this energy is untapped in man. It is in everybody and at any time it can come out. Sannyasa, the discipleship in which you are ordained, facilitates this process. When this energy is at your disposal, you must be very careful not to misuse it, either consciously or unconsciously. If you have a revolver, it can kill either a friend or a villain. It depends on what is in the mind. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that the mind is purified. That is the second thing I expect from my disciples.

With an impure mind which is withdrawn or filled with anger, prejudices, passions, hatred, jealousy, greed and likes and dislikes, if this energy wakes up, then one will do more harm than good. Whatever the situation may be, the disciple should be very calm and quiet within himself. Even if he is being choked or punished, he should still have peace of mind, equal vision, total humility, no hatred and no sense of revenge or defence. A calm, quiet and serene disciple, filled with understanding and compassion for all, is ready to use his awakened power for the good of humanity.

Now of course you are very few because we only started our work a few years ago, but I am certain that in a short time, my disciples are going to be the guiding stars of the whole of humanity. The signs are very clear. Therefore, I expect two things from my disciples: a free mind and a mind that is purified.

50

Three Types of Disciples

Swami Satyananda speaks on the different degrees of surrender required of householder, sannyasin and interior disciples. Recorded in a satsang at Satyanandashram Barcelona, Spain, in September 1980.

Surrender to guru or to God does not mean that your life is paralyzed. It only means that there is no difference between you and the guru. Your body and mind, your day-to-day life goes on unobstructed, but what is important is that you begin to think that the guru is not different from you. There is a feeling of total oneness.

There are three different types of disciples. There are the lay disciples or householders; sannyasin disciples or the monastic order; and the interior disciples who are always very few. For each of these three types, surrender takes place in a different dimension. The lay disciple has to surrender through devotion. The monastic disciple has to surrender his desires and worldly ambitions, and the intimate, interior disciple has to surrender everything.

A guru ordains his disciples for different purposes. He teaches his lay disciples in order to give them peace of mind and right understanding in life. Therefore, it is sufficient if they offer their devotion to him. They do not have to surrender their business, family and children to their guru, but they must offer their true devotion so the guru can help them. This is the first type of disciple.

Then there are the monastic disciples. They remain in the institution of the guru or live in other branches of the guru's ashram. Here, every activity of the monastic disciple has to be controlled by the guru for at least twelve years. Because the guru has to transform the whole person, he has to change not only the way of thinking but even the way of sleeping, eating, walking and talking. He even controls the number of times he visits the toilet. Like this, for twelve years, a monastic disciple is completely under the control of the guru, so that when he comes out of the monastic life, his whole personality is transformed. Then he can be a very good messenger of his guru's teachings. This is the second type of disciple.

The third category of disciple is very rare. They are the interior disciples, and the guru selects those for himself. First they are tested, and only those who prove worthy are taken in. Then every aspect of their life is controlled – their thinking, eating, sleeping and their emotions and passions. In the same way that you control the switch, you control their whole world. These interior disciples are never very many; you can count them on your fingers. They become the main distribution poles of the guru's energy. The monastic disciples are the transmitters of the guru's knowledge, his gospel, but it is the interior disciples who transmit the energy. That is why there are so few of them. There will always be more monastic disciples, and the lay disciples may even number in the hundreds of thousands.

So, the third type of disciple transmits the energy, the second type preaches the gospel and the first type practises the gospel. The type of surrender which has to be practised depends on the type of disciple. The first type of disciple offers his devotion, the second offers his life, and the third offers everything. So it is the choice of the disciple, and if a disciple wants to offer everything, nobody should object.

50

God and Guru

Swami Satyananda explains how the guru is divine for the disciple, but not necessarily for others. Taped on 2 April 1981 at the 'Tantra and Meditation' seminar held in Milano, Italy.

Guru is a human being. In the human body he may have an effulgent spirit or he may be ignorant, but the disciple considers his guru as a replica of divinity, and I think this is correct, but it is necessary to make certain amendments.

My guru was Swami Sivananda. I always regarded him as divinity and I still do, but I do not preach that he is God. That is the major amendment I want to make. The mistake here is that we consider our guru as God and we ask others to do likewise. My relationship with my guru is purely personal. Whether I regard him as divinity or as a monster, that is my personal opinion. Your guru is divine for you, I do not deny this truth, but if you want me to respect your guru as divine, I don't agree. That is where the confusions have come.

Divinity is inherent in every being. Some have awakened it and others have not. During my travels in search of a guru I met many souls, but I was searching for a guru in whom I could realize divinity. Of course, I knew that every guru is divine, but I could not see it.

The first saintly person whom I came across was Anandamayi Ma, a very venerated guru. I saw her when I was only ten, but at that time I could not see divinity in her. I don't say

that she was not divine. She was and she is, but I could not see it. After her, I met many great men – Ramana Maharshi, Sri Aurobindo, Swami Ramdas, Meher Baba, but I did not see God in any of them. They were godly, but I could not see it due to my early education in a Christian convent. I had read the Bible and the library of Christian saints, so I had all those things in my mind.

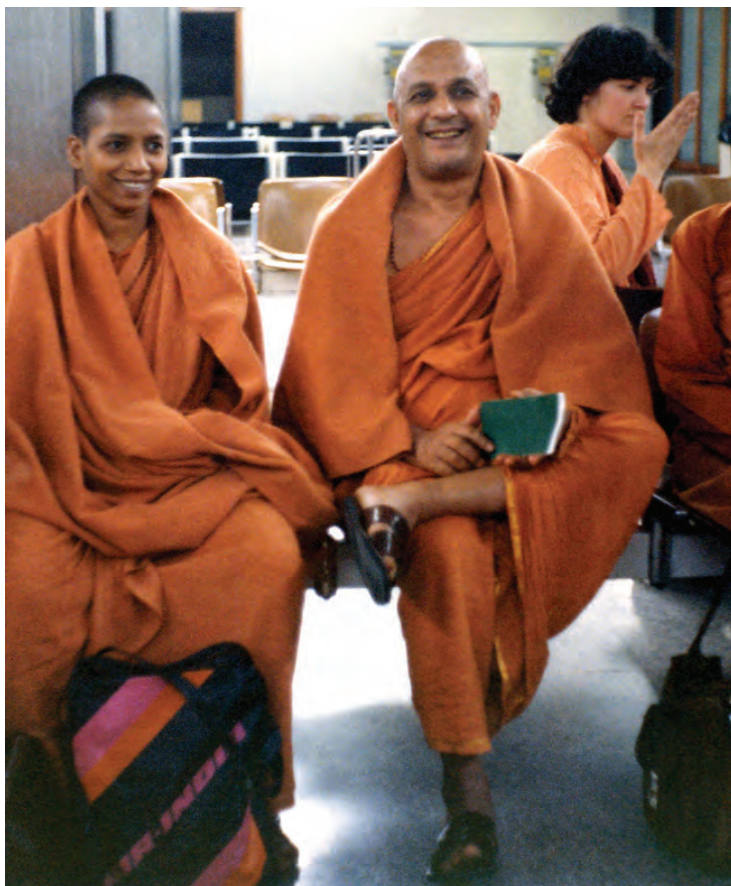
I also lived with an old tantric guru for six months. He was a very simple man, but a master of his science, and he loved me very much. I was nineteen then and he was sixty-seven. He wanted to teach me everything he knew, but I thought to myself, “I don’t see God in him. For me, he is a learned man, a good man, but I don’t see anything more in him.” So I left him.

However, on the very day I met Swami Sivananda, I started having experiences of lofty consciousness. I found in him divinity personified, and as long as I lived with him I saw something behind his physical form. Whenever people asked me, “Do you consider your guru as God?” I used to reply, “This is my personal matter, just as a man’s attitude towards his wife is a personal matter. So please don’t ask me this.” This is the fundamental thing which one must remember in relation to guru.

You must realize the divinity in your guru. If you are not able to do this, then he is not your guru. If there is petrol in a can and you touch fire to it, what will happen? Everybody knows. It is the same with the relationship between guru and disciple. The moment the guru touches the spirit of the disciple, there is an explosion. If there is no explosion, then there is something wrong. Maybe someone told you this is petrol, but it is really water. So when you bring fire, nothing happens because there is no petrol. The relationship is not complete because fire cannot ignite water.

In the same way, when you realize divinity in your guru, there is the revelation. This is not intellectual; it is spiritual. You begin to hear sounds, see visions, do automatic movements. Such a man is your guru and such a man should be the replica of divinity to you.

What is divinity? It is higher existence, the totality of creation, an expression of God. God is divine. Now, guru is the incarnation of divinity. Divinity is without name and form. It has no dimension in which to exist; it is total. But man cannot comprehend its formlessness, so the subtle and transcendental divinity incarnates out of its own goodwill and descends in a gross form so that man may understand it. These incarnations are known as avatars or prophets, and to the disciples they are known as guru or God.



51

Guru is One

Swami Satyananda discusses the interest which many disciples have for other gurus and teachers. He encourages the disciple to stick to one guru and one set of teachings, no matter how tempting the alternatives may seem. Taped at Satyananda Ashram Mangrove Mountain, Australia, on 13 November 1980.

Many disciples are interested in the works of different saints, authors and teachers. They are often inspired by other great teachers and there is no harm in this, but according to tradition, guru must be one. You can derive maximum possible spiritual energy from other sources, but don't be misled by those teachers who happen to convince your lower mind. When a teacher allows you to live in any way you want, of course you will like him. You will listen to what he has to say, not because it is the truth, but because it is convenient for you.

Do not be guided by superficial philosophies. You must plumb the depths of the teaching. In certain systems you are instructed not to oppose the mind, but this does not mean that you have to be undisciplined. During meditation or japa when the thoughts are swirling through the mind, that is the time not to oppose the mind. But when you are tackling the daily problems of life and the mind compels you to make wrong decisions, then the instructions, "Do not oppose the mind" no longer apply. At such times, if you go along with your mind, you will drive your car into the ditch.

Life anywhere, whether in the East or West, has to be very disciplined. Whether you are working in a factory, hospital or telephone exchange, there must be total control over the mental impulses. If you allow the mind to start jumping in the telephone exchange, it will be catastrophic.

It is only during moments of introspection, when you are alone with yourself, that you can safely allow the more volatile thoughts of greed, passion, violence and aggression to come into the mind. This does not mean that you should do these things; that would be total anarchy. However, many people interpret the teachings like this and so they live a very undisciplined life.

There have been many great teachers in the past such as Buddha, Christ, Krishna, Mohammed, who have left footprints in the sands of time. We should have total respect and reverence for them because they represent the divinity in human form. Their teachings and good works still inspire us today.

All these great men who have passed through the experience of divinity have continually taught one and the same thing. There is no conflict between their teachings. If you read the *Bhagavad Gita*, *Ramayana*, *Bible* or *Koran*, you will find that they have not drifted. However, those professors, psychologists and intellectuals who teach without having passed through the experience of divinity have drifted from the main teachings year after year. Sometimes they say one thing and then later they say something completely different. There is no uniformity, continuity or permanence in their message.

Continuity is a very important aspect of spiritual life. Although you may have respect for the different masters and spiritual paths, when it comes to your personal sadhana, you must follow one guru and one set of teachings. This is necessary so that the mind, which is dissipated and full of rajas, does not find an excuse to escape the practice. If your guru tells you to practise japa, continue the practice without changing it. This is the only way to progress in spiritual life.

I will give you a gross example. Once a girl marries, she has a special relationship with her husband which she doesn't have with any other man, and it is much better that she doesn't. But this does not mean that she should not talk to other men. One man may work in her office, another may be her brother-in-law. There is no harm in her talking to them.

Even as a girl has a special relationship with her husband, but a normal, workable relationship with everyone else, in the same way, the disciple must have a special relationship with the guru, but normal relationships with everyone else. We should respect all saints; we should not criticize anyone, but at the same time we should not lose faith in our guru just because another one seems more attractive.

There is no end to attractive people in the world. There is no end to attractive faiths. From time immemorial, hundreds of thousands of saints have been born on this earthly plane to guide human beings to the spiritual path. That is why today we are still surviving in a comparatively less spiritual society.



52

Guilt

Here, Swami Satyananda explains how guilt can play an important role in man's evolution. Recorded at Satyanandashram Paris, France, on 1 May 1980.

Guilt is one of the most natural qualities of life. It is one of the characteristics of the mind, and if this particular aspect of man's personality were to be eradicated, then the balance in emotional life would be lost completely. Man survives by guilt and man's mind evolves through guilt. Therefore, one should not try to overcome one's guilt directly. However, there is a stage in life when one can be free of guilt and there will not be any hindrance to one's mental or emotional evolution and one's state of balance will not be disturbed.

There are various qualities of guilt. One type of guilt arises when you do not follow the social-religious system. If you ignore either your wife, mother, child or any other relative you are living with, then you will start feeling guilty because your social-religious system has taught that you must take care of your relatives.

There is another very powerful form of guilt which everybody experiences at some point in their life. It is concerned with the fact that you are not leading a spiritual life. If you never go to church or the temple, and if you have never tried to establish communication with God and you don't practise anything spiritual, there is bound to be a period when you

will experience guilt. Now, this guilt is not bad. It has been created by nature in order to make you evolve. Without this guilt, people would die without doing anything spiritual.

Therefore, whenever these social-religious complexes creep into your mind, you should try to analyze the whole thing through the process of antar mouna. In this practice you do not direct, control or create the order of the thought processes. You are an impartial witness throughout the practice. When you are impartial you can analyze the causes of guilt. In many cases you will find that the guilt is very deep-rooted and is due to faulty education by your parents.

In my opinion, and of course I am an Indian, I think parents are responsible for this unnecessary guilt. Therefore, the individual ego falls into rebellion just to get out of the guilt. However, one can never overcome guilt unless one has transformed the quality of one's mind, and this cannot be done overnight. It must be done in stages.

You take a little cotton, transform it into thread and then again into a piece of cloth. Then you dye the cloth, and by cutting and stitching it, you transform the cloth into a shirt, dress, coat or whatever. The substance is still cotton, but it has undergone various stages of transformation. Just as the transformation has only occurred in the state and not in the substance, in the same way, through the practices of yoga, you can transform your state of mind without disturbing the mind.

53

Psychoanalysis

Swami Satyananda talks about the role psychoanalysis has played in modern culture. He also mentions the tantric system of auto-psychoanalysis and the use of yantras, mandalas and other symbols. Recorded on 7 September 1980 at the Transmission Seminar held in Chamarande, France.

Psychoanalysis is a young science which has in fact given some sort of direction to our modern culture, particularly in places where people have no time to analyze themselves. We are so busy with our external lives and our own selves that we have no time to think about the actions and reactions that are triggered by our thought processes. Therefore, the science of psychoanalysis has brought to us awareness of a process which we call cause and effect.

Every thought which comes to my mind is an effect. It has a remote cause as well as a close cause. And a thought that comes to my mind is not just an accident or a chance. Therefore, we have to analyze the chain of cause and effect. Now, this chain is not found on the upper surface of the mind. Its currents are mostly subterranean. A fear complex may not be due to an apparent cause, it may be inherent in a certain experience from childhood or a previous birth. So my present mental behaviour is not dependent on immediate factors. Its cause has to be located on the subterranean level. Because of this, modern psychoanalysis has its limitations, but at the

same time, as I have already said, it has given direction to the people of our culture.

In the science of tantra, there is a system of auto-psychoanalysis. The different devis, gods and goddesses you find in tantra are something like chemical stimulants. Let me explain this point. In order to analyze a thought, you have to go to its cause. Now, the basic cause has to be stimulated, and to do this, something must be substantiated. So these symbols are utilized to stimulate the deeper subterranean levels.

Those of you who have studied chemistry will understand me better. In order to analyze matter, you expose it to certain chemical conditions. This is a very common formula. In the same way, if you want to analyze your thoughts, you must adopt a similar procedure.

The psychic contents of an individual cannot be directly apprehended because in most cases our thoughts are distortions. This means that a thought which comes to you does not really represent your psyche. For example, you love your child, but sometimes you are very strict with him. Do you see what I mean? Your thought does not necessarily represent your psychic contents. So, just by witnessing a thought, you cannot say what its psychic content is. Therefore, a thought has to be processed through a symbol.

The symbols used in tantra are yantras, mandalas and the different deities and divinities. When a thought is cast into these patterns, then psychic expression takes place. Therefore, in the science of psychoanalysis, there is a considerable amount of material through which we can do a lot of work. But where psychoanalysis ends, yoga begins.

Therefore, in our modern countries where psychoanalysis has been in use for a long time, we have come to a point of culmination. From there yoga is carrying on the work. So let us accept the importance of psychoanalysis.

54

The Nature of the Mind

At the Transmission Seminar conducted in Chamarande, France, Swami Satyananda spoke about the five stages of the mind and related them to the three gunas and to the position of kundalini. Recorded in September 1980.

In order to discuss this subject fully, I would have to read you the whole of Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*. It is better if you study the commentary I have written on it – *Four Chapters on Freedom*. The mind is an evolving matter and according to yoga it has five stages. The unevolved mind is the first stage, the dissipating mind is the second, the oscillating mind is the third, the one-pointed mind is the fourth and the controlled mind is the fifth. Just as childhood, youth, middle age, and old age indicate the growth of the body, similarly, these five stages indicate the growth of the mind.

When the mind is under the sway of tamas, it is very dull and inert. When it is under rajas, it is oscillating, and when it is under both tamas and rajas, it is dissipated. On the other hand, when the mind is influenced by sattwa, it is completely controlled, and when it is under the sway of rajas and sattwa, it is one-pointed. In other words, the concentrated mind is an effect of rajas and sattwa, the controlled mind is an effect of sattwa, the oscillating mind is an effect of sattwa and rajas, the dissipating mind is an effect of tamas and rajas, and the dull mind is an effect of tamas.

The three gunas, tamas, rajas and sattwa, belong to what we call *moola prakriti*, the primal nature. We are not talking about nature in manifestation, but nature in its primordial state. The mind is controlled by the natural processes; it is not independent of nature. Therefore, the three gunas, which are stages of prakriti, control the influxes of the mind. From time to time the mind is subject to the interplay of the three gunas. When the nature is preponderant with rajas, there is creation and evolution. When there is tamas in nature, everything is static; there is no creation because creativity is an unmanifest condition .

The whole creation, the universe, is eternal, but at the same time thousands of creations, thousands of universes are being created and destroyed, and at the same time there are millions of universes yet to be born. They are in the tamasic state. So, it is said, "There was no light, there was nothing; everything was static." That is called the tamasic state of the universe or of nature. From tamas, rajas evolves and when there is rajas, there is creation and activity and there is permutation and combination. You can see it in every sphere; it is in the sphere of nature and the sphere of mind. Then it evolves into sattwa, the harmonious state of balance between tamas and rajas.

Now, the individual mind is subject to this law and this again can be related to kundalini. When kundalini is in mooladhara chakra, it is enwrapped in tamas, because it is not manifesting. When it begins to manifest, it will be in rajo guna, and when it reaches sahasrara chakra, the highest level of evolution, that is sattwa.

Throughout the original books on tantra and kundalini, one thing has been said, "The divinity is enwrapped in tamo guna; the light is enveloped by darkness." It is said in so many different ways – kundalini is sleeping, it is enwrapped by darkness, it has the garment of tamo guna. What this means is that the higher intelligence or the great shakti in man is in an unmanifest state; it is at the level of tamo guna. Tamo guna is not a bad thing. *Tama* is a Sanskrit word which means

darkness. What exactly does darkness mean? Darkness is where the objects cannot be distinguished. In absolute darkness there may be a table and a chair, a man and a woman and so many other things, but nothing can be distinguished. So tamo guna is a state where distinction cannot be made because there is no light and there is no manifestation.

Now, kundalini is in an unmanifest state. And what is kundalini? It is the point of evolution where the animal evolution has stopped. From where the animal evolution stops the evolution of kundalini takes place. There are chakras below mooladhara chakra and above sahasrara chakra. The chakras below mooladhara chakra belong to the animal incarnations. Let us not use the word animal, because when we hear that word we think of four feet. We will call the chakras below mooladhara the non-mental chakras. Those chakras which are above sahasrara are the transcendental chakras.

When kundalini becomes free from the influence of tamas, it becomes involved with rajas. This engagement with rajas is called ascension, as at this stage, the kundalini makes its headway through sushumna to ajna chakra and finally to sahasrara. Mental evolution ends and begins at mooladhara chakra. You see, mental evolution is the last chapter of animal existence. When there is absolute evolution of the human mind, you have completed your animal cycle, then the human cycle begins with the awakening of a new mind whose seat is in mooladhara chakra.

Now, kundalini can be called the supermind, or you can say it is the human mind. The mind we have at present is actually not the human mind; perhaps it is the culminating point of the animal mind. The human mind is associated with spiritual consciousness. Let me illustrate this simply. If you want to travel by cart, you can yoke a horse, a bull, a donkey or a husky dog to the cart. Or you can connect a steam engine, a diesel engine or a nuclear power engine to the cart. Just as the cart can be driven by different forms of energy, in the same way, man can travel through life with the animal mind, the supermind or with no mind.

When you drive this body with no mind, you are a junior god, an avatar or a son of God. When you drive this body with a supermind, you are a saint, an evolved human being or a jivanmukta. Such people are actually using the human mind. And when you drive this body with the lower mind, then you are a happy man, an unhappy man, a lucky man, an unlucky man, and sometimes a hopeless man. Because the mind which is driving this body has limited power, it has to depend on the five senses, and they are not absolute reliable. Sometimes they cooperate and sometimes they don't.

So, now I hope you have a very clear understanding of the three stages of mind – the lower mind, the higher mind and the state of mindlessness.



55

What is Kundalini?

In this short talk, given in Tenerife, Canary Islands, Swami Satyananda introduced the subject of kundalini and explained how man discovered this greater energy and developed methods to awaken it. Taped on 26 September 1980.

Everybody should know something about kundalini as it represents the coming consciousness of mankind. The present consciousness of man is dependent on the senses and the objects, but beyond that is the power of kundalini. Kundalini is the primal power which is in every human being. It is situated at the root of the spinal column, at the coccyx or tailbone. In the masculine body it is in the perineum, between the urinary and excretory organs. In the female body its location is at the root of the uterus, in the cervix. This centre is known as mooladhara chakra and it is actually a physical structure. It is a small gland which you can even take out and press. However, kundalini is a dormant energy, and even if you take it out and press it, it will not explode like a bomb.

To awaken kundalini, you must prepare yourself through yogic techniques. You must practise asanas, pranayama, kriya yoga and meditation. Then, when you are able to force your prana into kundalini, the energy wakes up and makes its way through sushumna nadi, the central nervous canal, to the brain. As kundalini ascends, it passes through each of the chakras, which are interconnected with the different silent

areas of the brain. With the awakening of kundalini there is an explosion in the brain as the dormant or sleeping areas start blossoming like flowers.

Although kundalini is said to reside in mooladhara chakra, we are all at different stages of evolution, and in some of us kundalini may have already reached swadhisthana, manipura or anahata chakra. If this is so, whatever sadhana you do now might start an awakening in anahata or some other chakra. However, awakening of kundalini in mooladhara chakra is one thing, and awakening in sahasrara, the highest centre of the brain, is another. Once the multi-petalled lotus of sahasrara blossoms, a new consciousness dawns. Our present consciousness is not independent, as the mind depends on the information supplied by the senses. If you have no eyes, you can never see; if you are deaf, you will never hear. However, when the superconsciousness emerges, experience becomes independent and knowledge also becomes independent.

Kundalini yoga is a very important part of tantra. In fact, the objective of tantra is to awaken kundalini so as to evolve the consciousness. How did man discover kundalini? Right from the beginning of creation, man witnessed many transcendental happenings. Sometimes he was able to read the thoughts of others, he witnessed somebody else's predictions coming true, or he may even have seen his own dreams manifesting into realities. He pondered over the fact that some people could write inspiring poems or compose beautiful music, whereas others couldn't; one person could fight on the battlefield for days together and another person couldn't even get up from his bed. So he wanted to discover why everybody seemed to be different.

In the course of his investigations, man came to understand that within every individual there is a special form of energy. He saw that in some people it was dormant, in others it was evolving and in a very small minority of people, it was actually awakened. Originally, man named this energy after the gods and goddesses. Then he discovered prana and called it prana shakti. In tantra they called it kundalini.

Man realized the unmanifest potential that could be unleashed with the awakening of kundalini and he tried to find a means of awakening it. In the vedic period, people used soma to bring about an awakening, but later it was misused and withdrawn, and now nobody knows exactly what it was. Next they worshipped fire and performed yajnas, then they practised austerities, yoga and pranayama, left hand and right hand tantra, then Vedanta. But eventually they realized that bhakti was the safest and surest path.

However, there was a problem with bhakti – not everyone could develop it. Very few people had a natural, spontaneous and unconditional love for God. So finally, three paths were declared suitable for the awakening of kundalini. One was the path of yoga, the second was the path of tantra and the third was the path of dhyana. Dhyana yoga was actually Vedanta, concentration, meditation, reflection and consideration of oneself as the supreme. The path of yoga included hatha yoga, laya yoga and so on. Tantra offered the left and right hand paths and kriya yoga. Of all the paths, kriya yoga was found to be the best.



56

Why Awaken Kundalini?

Kundalini represents the infinite potential which can be realized by all of us once we can see beyond our limited material existence. In this talk, given at the Transmission Seminar, Chamarande, France, Swami Satyananda describes the transformation of mind and re-orientation of personality which accompany kundalini awakening. Taped on 3 September 1980.

For a very long time we have been led to believe that we are the body, mind and senses, and we have not been able to transcend the compulsions of the flesh. All along, that has been man's greatest weakness. Of course it is true that we have a body and mind, but it is unfortunate that we are involuntarily restricted by them. If we could just look within ourselves, then we would come to realize that behind the body and mind there lies a great and dynamic force. The body and mind are not ultimate substances. Man is not weak and impotent; his grief is his weakness, his sorrows are his compulsions and his emotional breakdowns are his circumstances. There must be some way by which man can rise beyond all these tragedies.

Now, although man has not realized it, he possesses inherent intelligence. When scientists discovered nuclear energy in matter, it was a great surprise. For an ordinary person, matter is just matter. For example, unless you are a scientist for you sand will just be sand, but the big penetrating discoveries of science have revealed that sand contains potential nuclear

energy. In the same way, why can't you believe that there is inherent intelligence within this human body? Are we only sinners? Are we only greedy and passionate? Is that the only definition of our personality? Is it not possible that we may be more than this?

If that be so, then what are we? Because we do not find any evidence that we are something more than our body, and we find a clear-cut boundary of life, we think we are only this much. One fine day you are born from your mother's womb, that is your first birthday, and one fine day you die, that's your last birthday. Your eyes are not capable of visualizing your existence beyond this last birthday and before the first birthday.

We have to be very clear about this point. Either we are infinite or we are limited human beings. If you are a finite human being, then there is no use for yoga, religion or spiritual life. If you are a finite being, then your philosophy ought only to be, "eat, drink and be merry." If you are an infinite being, if beyond this perceptible matter there is an imperceptible reality, then what is that reality? Can it be realized? Can it be manifested? Is it possible to change the quality of your personality? The answer is yes, and this is the purpose of yoga and tantra.

Yoga and tantra have stressed time and time again that within the human being there is an inherent intelligence which is known as kundalini. This kundalini is the sleeping consciousness which exists in every human being, and each person has the chance to awaken this potential divine force. The ordinary mind is controlled by sensory experience, but with the awakening of this great shakti known as kundalini, man's consciousness undergoes a process of metamorphosis. When the elements of the mind are transformed, the quality of knowledge is extraordinary.

There are many souls who are born with awakened kundalini; they are the prophets and saints, inspired artists and musicians, poets and writers, clairvoyants and messiahs. Their quality of mind, behaviour and consciousness is exceptional.

There are many different processes of the mind, involving both progression and regression. For example, some children become retarded, and in others the brain regresses and they are sent to mental hospitals. On the other hand, in some children there is a sudden progression in the mental development and they become brilliant.

Now we come to an important point. Some people have absolute peace of mind and others are hopelessly restless. Restlessness is a quality of the mind and peacefulness is a transformed state of mind. If you look carefully, you will find that people who have attained peace of mind are not disturbed by any conditions. You can insult them and harass them, but they do not lose their peace of mind. Even if they are kicked mercilessly, they maintain their blissful state. It is not because they are retarded or ignorant, but because they have equanimity of mind.

On the other hand, there are people who have everything – beautiful children, brilliant relatives, special social benefits, a luxurious house, car and television, but still they are restless. If you love them they are restless, if you kick them they're restless. If they have a lot of money they're insecure and if they begin to lose it, they're more insecure. It's not the circumstances of life that cause these negative feelings; it's the quality of the mind. If the mind is transformed, even unfavourable circumstances cannot affect it, and if the mind is restless, the most favourable circumstances will not be able to alter it.

With the awakening of kundalini, the greater intelligence is aroused from its sleep and you can give birth to a new range of creativity. When kundalini awakens, you are not only blessed with the vision of God, you could become a brilliant designer, a wonderful cook, an excellent father, husband, wife or son. Or you could become an outstanding leader, prime minister, governor or president. Therefore, the awakening of kundalini affects the whole area of the human mind and behaviour.

Kundalini is not a myth or an illusion. It is not a hypothesis or a hypnotic suggestion. Kundalini is a biological substance that exists within the framework of the body. Its awakening

generates electrical impulses throughout the whole body and these impulses can be detected by modern scientific instruments and machines. Therefore, each of us should consider the importance and the benefits of awakening kundalini, and we should make a resolve to awaken this great shakti.



Yoga for Children

Swami Satyananda discusses some of the major problems children confront between the ages of seven and twelve and explains their physiological causes. He also talks about yogic practices which were once commonly taught to all Hindu children to stabilize their physical, mental and emotional development. Taped during the kriya yoga course conducted for European aspirants at Bihar School of Yoga, Munger, in July 1978.

In India, children are traditionally introduced to the practice of yoga at the age of eight, nine or ten. The Hindus have a ceremony for children of this age in which they are taught surya namaskara, nadi shodhana pranayama and Gayatri mantra. This tradition still continues on a small scale today, but it was also necessary to include yoga in the formal education system. I was among the first to introduce the yoga curriculum to schools. Then I surveyed the problems of children.

Children have many unexplained and unexpressed problems. They cannot express their problems correctly because their powers of expression and their knowledge of their own psychology are not mature enough. Hence, children usually express their problems in their behaviour, and unless a psychoanalyst studies the behaviour of children he will not provide an accurate diagnosis. It becomes very difficult for most parents because they are not psychoanalysts and they consider the problems of their children subjectively. For in-

stance, if a child is arrogant and disobedient, the parents will brand him as 'disobedient', but will not go deeper into the cause of the disobedience. If the child does not want to stay at home and would rather be with his friends, good or bad, the parents will brand him a vagabond or loafer. A psychoanalyst will try to analyze the cause, but most parents cannot do it. It is not because they don't know how to analyze, but just because they are the parents. They are biased.

I find there is an imbalance between certain tendencies in children from the ages of seven to twelve. Physical growth and psychological growth do not mature together. I am using the term 'physical growth' here in relation to the brain, nervous system and endocrine system. Sometimes the physical growth is more advanced than the mental growth and many times the mental growth is more advanced than the physical. This is the primary basis for problems in children.

We should not try to interpret the problems of children in the light of ethics and morality. For instance, if there is an excess of adrenal secretions, the child will be full of fears. He is not able to face difficult people, and if at school he has a very serious teacher, then he is always scared. He does not want to face the teacher and he does not like the subject either. In this case, the cause of the problem is not ethical or moral, it is not even social; it is absolutely psychophysiological. All we need to do is balance the adrenal secretions and we can definitely change the character of the child. Those who are interested in working out the problems of children will have to study the emotional effects of the hormones in the system. Similar problems are also caused by imbalance between the thyroid and the adrenal hormones.

At the age of seven or eight, the pineal gland starts regressing and when this process has advanced to certain degree, the sex hormones start functioning in the body. Until this time, the pineal gland arrests the sexual consciousness in the child and also the associated rapid growth of the emotional and mental character. The moment the regression of the pineal gland is complete, the emotional growth becomes terribly

rapid and the child finds it difficult to adjust himself. The problem of emotional adjustment is very important in the life of the child, and if we can delay emotional growth in relation to physical growth, the child's stability is enhanced greatly. To do this we have to maintain the health of the pineal gland, and for this the practice of shambhavi mudra (concentration of the eyes on the eyebrow centre) is very important.

As we can see, the pineal gland is very important. In yoga it is known as ajna chakra and it is situated in the brain at the top of the medulla oblongata. It is a very small gland and it acts like a lock. As long as the pineal gland is in good health, the anarchical sexual behaviour does not occur. Sexual consciousness should develop when the child is able to balance its reaction in his mind. If the awareness of sexual fantasies develops before he is able to express them, it can hit him hard. He may sometimes have frightening, terrible, fantastic or confusing dreams. At the same time, in his day-to-day life he tries to overcome this awareness by behaving in a way that people do not like. The early maturity of sexual awareness can thus almost break a child's mind. When the sex hormones start being secreted in girls for instance, the mammary glands, the ovaries and uterus all start to function. Now if the pineal gland is out of the picture too early, the whole confusion starts at the wrong time. The child becomes restless because she is not physically ready to express this new development.

Hence it is beneficial for children to practise shambhavi mudra in order to influence ajna chakra inwardly and to delay sexual maturity until the correct time. To make this practice more interesting, we ask the child to practise visualization at the same time. In this practice we name about fifty items and let the child visualize them one by one. He keeps on moving his awareness, saying to himself and seeing a pink rose, a flowing river, a snow-capped mountain, a moving car, an aeroplane in flight, a guava fruit, a church and so on.

There are three ranges of objects to visualize. One is the range of objects which the child has seen, another is the range he has not seen and the third is the range of abstract

concepts such as love/hatred. This practice not only helps the child to maintain psychoemotional balance, it also develops his ability to visualize. Later on, when he is in school studying geography, history and mathematics, he will have a visualizing mind as well as a thinking mind.

Although we don't have strong scientific evidence for this, I believe that the practice of yoga can also maintain the health of the pineal gland and add extra years to its life. This is why in India, we have been teaching surya namaskara (a dynamic yoga exercise); nadi shodhana pranayama (for health and balance of the pineal gland); mantra (to challenge the child's distracted mind); and shambhavi mudra with visualization (to maintain the pineal gland).



58

Relationship between Hatha Yoga and Tantra

Many people ask which is the superior practice, hatha yoga or tantra. Here Swami Satyananda points out that yoga is an offshoot of tantra. Recorded at the Transmission Seminar held in Chamarande, France, in September 1980.

What is the relationship between yoga and tantra? Yoga is a process of fission and fusion. Therefore, tantra and yoga have exactly the same meaning. They are not two separate philosophies. They are only two different terms belonging to the same way of life. More accurately, we can say that yoga is the practical aspect, while tantra is the theoretical aspect. What tantra explains yoga asks us to practise.

Tantra and yoga should be viewed as one science, not as two. Tantra is the mother and yoga is the son. The different books you have read on yoga have all been reproduced from tantric texts, not from any other school of philosophy. The varied and diverse systems of yoga which are being practised all over the world today originated from tantra.

Some of the greatest philosophers of the East and West have written that all the bodies of practical knowledge called yoga are an offshoot of Samkhya, which is one of the six schools of Hindu philosophical thought. However, this is not correct. In no chapter or sutra in all of Samkhya is there any reference to asanas, hatha yoga, kundalini yoga, mantra yoga, raja yoga or laya yoga.

Hatha yoga is a branch or part of tantra. The preparation for tantra has to be made through the practices of hatha yoga. The physical body should first be purified, then the pranic body should be purified. You should be able to practise uddiyana bandha and vajroli; you should be able to concentrate on the eyebrow centre; only then are you ready to practise vama marga or the other branches of tantra. Therefore, when you practise hatha yoga, you must remember that it is in no way separate from tantra.

Most people think that hatha yoga is only postures, but if you analyze the word hatha, the meaning will be very clear. *Ha* means sun and *tha* means moon. In the physical body these are twin forces; the solar force is prana and light while the lunar force is mind and consciousness. In order to bring about an awakening, there has to be union between these two forces, and that process is called hatha yoga.

In tantra, we speak about the union of Shiva and Shakti. Shiva is consciousness and Shakti is cosmic nature. Shiva and Shakti represent space and time. The interaction between space and time is the basis of tantra. In the cosmos, space is the positive pole and time is the negative pole, just as you have the positive and negative poles in electricity. When they are separate there is no explosion or sparking, but when the two poles join, there is sparking. In the same way, as long as Shiva and Shakti stay separate, time and space remain separate and there is no creation. When they join together, the explosion takes place.

This explosion takes place in the nucleus of matter. All matter has a nucleus. Nuclear energy is called nuclear because that is the heart of the matter. Now, as this matter explodes, the nucleus is formed. This is the science of hatha yoga. Ida and pingala unite in ajna chakra at the top of the spinal cord, and this union is responsible for spiritual illumination. This is the meaning of hatha yoga. Yoga means union. Hatha means sun and moon, ida and pingala, prana and mind, Shiva and Shakti, positive and negative.

Tantra is a process of expansion and liberation of these dual forces. Just as a scientist in his laboratory splits the atom and energy is liberated, in the same way energy is liberated from the mind. That is tantra. This is not something mystical; it is a very scientific process. Today, scientists sit in a laboratory breaking and analyzing matter, but they are not splitting and analyzing the mind. However, we must understand that mind is also matter.

Now, what is matter? Scientists tell us very clearly that matter is a composition of more than ninety-six elements. Therefore, it is not homogeneous or absolute. Likewise, mind is matter, comparatively subtler than other matter, but it is also not homogeneous or absolute. Mind is a composition of hundreds and thousands of archetypes, all the impressions of this and past incarnations.

Just as a scientist has a laboratory where he splits and analyzes matter, a tantric also has a laboratory – his mind. He analyzes each and every karma and each and every action that is stored within his brain. In this way, the tantric is splitting and analyzing the mind just like the scientist who is working on matter. When you split matter there is nuclear energy, and when you split the mind there is illumination.

Therefore, hatha yoga is an absolute preliminary preparation for tantric practices. However, there are many misguided people who believe that asanas are only acrobatic feats, pranayama is only control of oxygen, nitrogen and carbon dioxide, and mantra is a kind of religious incantation. They do not understand the science.

Asana, pranayama, mudras and bandhas are necessary processes of revelation in this human laboratory. If a scientist is sitting in a laboratory, and there is no electrical line, what can the poor fellow do? If there is no air conditioning or central heating, what can he do? In the same way, you are seated in the main control room of this lab, watching all the behaviour of the mind, noting down all the reactions of the mind in relation to the body. If your stomach is bad, your blood pressure is fluctuating, your nervous system is depressed

and your bloodstream is full of toxins, do you think you will succeed with your experiment? You will come out with the wrong information. So please remember, hatha yoga and tantra are interrelated subjects.



59

Tantra and Vedanta

Many people believe that tantra and Vedanta are contradictory, because tantra is based on the dual forces of Shiva and Shakti, while vedantic philosophy is strictly monistic. However, in this talk, Swami Satyananda shows how these two philosophies represent different stages of the same continuous spiritual process. Recorded at Bihar School of Yoga, Munger, on 20 January 1981 during a satsang with yoga aspirants from Greece.

In the evolution of man's knowledge, his mind experiences various states. The experience of a child cannot be the experience of an adult, and the experience of an adult will be different from that of a child. Tantra is a process of evolution of consciousness and Vedanta is an experience. Therefore, the relationship between the sadhana and ultimate realization is the relationship between tantra and Vedanta.

In tantra there is the postulation of duality, whereas in Vedanta there is no duality, there is only one absolute. The ultimate experience when the mundane consciousness is annihilated is the experience of oneness or of non-duality. This experience is also known as adwaita, and adwaita philosophy is known as pure monism.

Now, if you analyze the meaning of the word Vedanta, it comprises two ideas: veda and anta. *Anta* means culmination and *veda* means the complete process of knowledge and awareness. When you are studying a particular subject,

the whole effort that you make to understand the subject is known as veda. In the ancient Hindu culture, veda represents the higher revealed knowledge. Just as it is believed that the Bible, the Koran and the Zend Avesta were revealed, in the same way, it should be known that a process of revelation takes place in every enlightened person's life. Therefore, *Vedanta* means 'culmination of a process of knowledge'.

While you are passing through a spiritual process in life, you come across various psychic, occult or spiritual experiences. Some aspirants hear sounds, see the light and have fantastic experiences of the awakening of kundalini, but all these are transitory experiences, they are never permanent. There is a moment, however, when the ultimate experience comes. This experience is known as the vedantic experience.

The Upanishads are the background or the basis and foundation of vedantic philosophy. If Vedanta is to be explained in a simple way, it is that one is ultimate and multiplicity is the expansion of one. However, tantra does not talk of the ultimate experience, but of the process of enlightenment. In tantra there is duality; there are two realities, Shiva and Shakti. As in hatha yoga you have ida and pingala nadis representing chitta and prana, in the same way, on the cosmic level, you have Shiva representing the total matter and Shakti representing the total energy.

Now, the union that takes place between Shiva and Shakti is considered to be the ultimate experience. This means all the experiences we have in spiritual life are the result of a union or combination of the two forces within us. Philosophically, therefore, we can say that every experience in spiritual life is a product of duality. You may see light or you may hear voices; you may have any kind of spiritual experience, but it is a product of duality not of non-duality.

As such, all experiences which we have during life, either on the sensorial or the spiritual planes, are not absolute experiences. The experience of a siddha, a miracle man, a clairvoyant, telepath, prophet or anyone is an experience produced by an

interaction of two forces. The basis of all experiences is human consciousness, and these experiences are aided by the sensorial channels. When the senses and the mind interact with each other, they produce a true or a false experience. If your mind is purified and your senses are under control, you will have more tangible experiences, but not the absolute experience. If your senses are unruly and your mind is full of dross, then the experiences which you have will be faulty.

Now, fundamentally, Tantra and Vedanta can be viewed as two different traditions but, ultimately, when they are to be understood in the context of human experience, they have to be seen as systematically linked with each other. For example, in mathematics, first distances, measurements and weights are taught. Our children learn about them in primary school, but when they are in high school they are taught that all the distances and weights are false. If they are false, then why did they have to learn them? Because there are two forms of knowledge. One is relative and the other is absolute.

In spiritual life, as long as you are acting through the mind and senses, you will require relative knowledge, but as soon as you have transcended these tools of knowledge, the absolute knowledge dawns. Even though the truth is absolute, you cannot deny the necessity of the relative processes of knowledge. In order to climb to the rooftop terrace you need the staircase, and in the same way, to attain an absolute experience you have to go through the relative processes of experience. This is precisely the link between dualistic tantra and monistic Vedanta.

Most scholars have difficulty in understanding this. They think if there is duality, it should always be duality and if there is one, it should always be only one. This is a mistake. When we say that the absolute is one, we conceive of that one in the same way as we think of one rupee, one pound or one dollar. But one is not a limited unit, it is the totality of everything; it is a synonymous term used for the absolute. In Sanskrit it is known as *poornam* and there is a famous mantra which you might have heard: “This is poornam; that is poornam. From

the poornam the poornam emanates. When the poornam is deducted from the poornam, what remains is poornam.”

Now, to put this into mathematics: infinity plus infinity is equal to infinity. Infinity minus infinity is equal to infinity. Well, if you say zero plus zero, it can't be one, and zero minus zero is also not one. This is precisely the relationship between dualistic tantra and monistic Vedanta. When Einstein was asked to define relativity and the absolute, he gave his famous equation. People said, “No, we want to understand it in a different way.” So he said, “Both are phases of human experience; one depends on external factors and the other on the reality.”



60

Bhakti Yoga

Here Swami Satyananda talks about bhakti yoga and describes it as the process of redirecting love from matter to spirit. Taped at Bihar School of Yoga, Munger, during the Teacher Training Course of March 1980.

Bhakti yoga is a process in which your emotions are involved and your awareness is directed and dedicated to a higher being. This higher being may be the ishta devata or your guru, a saint, atman or self, or the formlessness of time and space. Whenever your tendencies and mind are directed towards the subtle spheres of existence, with complete dedication, that is known as bhakti. When the same tendencies flow to the outside through the *indriyas*, the senses, either with *shuddha*, positive, or *ashuddha*, negative, aspects that is not bhakti but modifications of the mind, *chitta vritti*.

If you love the divine being, or God the Almighty, your love is consumed in totality; it is not subject to reaction. Therefore, bhakti yoga is the redirection of love from matter to spirit. You sing the name of the supreme being, you repeat his name, you think of his glories and greatness and you try to keep him in your heart and mind all the time, as you generally do with the ordinary things of life. When your heart and mind are given in attachment to the things of the world, then you feel pain, agony and disappointment; there is always separation. But when you dedicate your mind to

God, or a divine being, then you find total satisfaction, and at the same time, an experience of fulfilment.

Bhakti yoga is the highest culmination in man's life and if bhakti happens to manifest in you by itself, even without listening to me or reading the *Gita* or *Ramayana*; if it comes to you naturally, then you have reached the summum bonum of earthly life. You have come to the climax of human evolution.

Bhakti is not as easy and as ordinary as most of us have been led to believe. In fact, I have found bhakti extremely difficult. It cannot be taught, it has to be inborn. You cannot become an intellectual bhakta, and that is where most of us are failing. Everything in this world can be learned, and you can even attain nirvikalpa samadhi without much difficulty, but how hard it is to develop even a speck of bhakti! It is an experience that will completely transport you from this plane to that plane of experience within a trice. It doesn't take years or months, but just a few seconds.

How can bhakti be developed? Ramakrishna has said that one has to divert the totality of his experience, only then will it happen. As you love your wife or husband, your child or mother, or your wealth and property, yourself and your life, that total love will have to be directed to God. Then he will be here and now.

For a jnani, God is nowhere, but for a bhakta, God is here and he is everywhere. The concept of bhakti completely transforms every speck of existence and then you are not a mere man. Now, at the same time, you must remember that in bhakti duality exists. There is the lover and there is the beloved. This *dvaita* or duality is something that bhaktas do not want to part with.

Lord Krishna, who is known as *Yogeshwara*, the Lord of Yoga, once sent his disciple Uddho to Gokul to conduct yoga classes for the gopis. When Uddho met the gopis they asked, "How is Krishna? Why have you come?" Uddho replied, "Don't worry about Krishna, I've come to teach you yoga. We'll start tomorrow." The cleverest of the gopis asked, "What

yoga are you going to teach us? We have only one mind and one awareness and they have gone to Dwarka where Krishna is, so which mind are you going to train?” If your mind is as one-pointed as the gopis, what need have you for any other form of yoga?

Therefore, the culmination of all paths: tantra, raja yoga, karma yoga, and even jnana yoga, is bhakti. Just as all the rivers flowing from every part of the Himalayas ultimately reach Indranagar, the totality of man’s consciousness, his mystic, occult consciousness, his psyche, subconscious and conscious mind, all meet at one point – bhakti. Once bhakti is realized, there is nothing beyond that. So, bhakti is the most powerful method to come face to face with and realize that formless, nameless, transcendental paramatma in any form. It is definitely not a myth.



61

The Power of Bhakti

Swami Satyananda talks about the possibility of manifesting God or guru by streamlining the emotions and intensifying bhakti. Although this is an extremely difficult task for the average person, many have achieved it. Swami Satyananda tells the story of one such bhakta, Saint Mirabai. Recorded at Collbato, Spain, in September 1979.

Bhakti is of two types. There is independent devotion and there is ritualistic devotion. When you go to a temple, mosque, church, chapel or cathedral and pray, that is ritualistic bhakti. It is a type of training. But if you can channel all your emotions in independent devotion, then bhakti becomes very powerful. When bhakti is of great intensity, it is possible to feel the presence of the person to whom you are devoted. I could cite hundreds of examples of devotees who have been able to achieve this, but this bhakti which can materialize a person before you is not easy for intellectuals. For those who are innocent and childlike, who don't question too much, and who have one-pointed and unfaltering faith, this higher bhakti is possible.

However, such people are rare, and in most of us the flow of bhakti is dissipated. You love your brother, friend or child, that is emotion; you love a man, your father or mother, that is emotion. And when you love your property, wealth and material possessions, that is also emotion. In this way our emotions are dissipated. If you can cut off everything else completely,

then you can connect yourself with God or guru. At present your devotion is partitioned, you have eighty percent for the things of this world and only a little bit to spare for God or guru.

If I hold your nose and try to strangle you, what will happen? You will fight desperately for your life. The kind of anxiety and desperation you would experience to live is akin to the degree of devotion necessary to materialize God or guru. If you are a real *bhakta* or devotee and I ask you to come and follow me like a dog, you won't think first and decide whether this is good or bad, your mind will be one-pointed. It is because of the depth and intensity of the bhakti that one can make the guru or God manifest.

Bhakti is the greatest force, but it is very difficult. You can ring the temple bell, read the prayers in church or do anything externally, but streamlining your emotions is almost impossible. However, in bhakti yoga you must be able to do this. Guru is your father and mother, that is one emotion. He is your son, that is the second. Guru is your master, that is the third aspect. He is your friend, that is the fourth. Guru is your servant, that is the fifth form of emotion. He is a very bad man and you despise him, this is the sixth capacity. The more you hate your guru, the more you think about him. If you are angry with him and you constantly abuse him, you are always thinking about him. These are the six forms of emotion which you normally find in life. You try to direct them all to guru. That is why people say God is my father, my husband or wife and my servant. This is important. If you can channel all your emotions, you don't need money, you don't need yoga, you don't need anything. Bhakti is the atom bomb of spiritual life.

There are many stories of Hindu, Christian and Muslim saints who were great bhaktas. All these people were the same, they were crazy people, madmen. But they were not bad people, they were very pure. One among them was a little Indian girl who lived more than five hundred years ago during the period of Akbar the Great. She was the princess

of one of the most powerful states of India. When she was very young, she was given a statue of Lord Krishna and she began to think he was her husband.

When she grew up, she was married to a prince from another great state. That was her social marriage, but she always thought she was married to Krishna. When she went to her in-laws' place and became queen, a maidservant carried rumours that she was talking to someone in her room at night. Once her husband waited at her door, ready with his sword as he overheard her talking to someone. She was saying, "Oh my darling, I love you." Her husband became furious and broke down the door. Of course he didn't find anybody there but his wife.

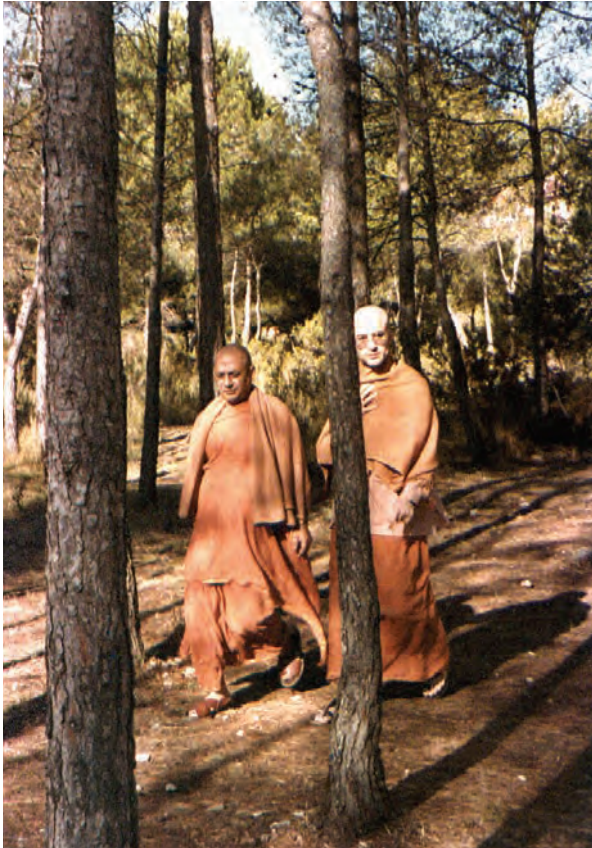
He asked her to whom she was talking and she told him she had been speaking to Krishna. He asked her who Krishna was and she replied that he was her husband. He said, "How is that possible? You are married to me." Then he asked her where Krishna was. She replied, "He doesn't have a body. I am married to God." Of course the poor man did not understand.

Anyway, her in-laws decided to kill her because she was going against all the customs of royalty. She was the wife of a very powerful king and she was also the daughter of another powerful king, but she made a habit of inviting all the swamis and sadhus to a temple where she would do kirtan and dance every night. This was not proper etiquette in that society. Queen Elizabeth would never do that, nor would the Queen of Spain. So they decided to poison her. They gave her milk containing deadly poison, but when she drank it nothing happened. They then sent her a parcel containing a cobra. However, when she opened it, in place of the cobra, she found a small symbol of Lord Vishnu. Well, it was not her miracle, we don't know what it was.

When she realized it was not possible for her to stay in the capital, she went to Delhi, Mathura, Agra, Vrindavan and Varanasi. She spent her last years in Mathura and when it was time for her to die, she entered the temple of Krishna

and disintegrated into light. She was a simple woman, but on account of her innocent devotion to Krishna, she was able to turn matter into light. Well, light can be turned into matter and matter into light. But how did she do it? She was able to separate the particles. There are hundreds of such people in our history.

So, the path of devotion is the path of affection, service, dedication, total surrender, love, giving of mind, body, soul and everything. Then what remains of you? Nothing. That nothingness is liberation, it is everything.



62

What is Love?

Swami Satyananda talks about his understanding of love. Love is union and union is yoga. Taped at Satyananda Ashram Mangrove Mountain, Australia, in November 1980.

It is very difficult for me to explain love because I have never experienced what you people call love. However, I have thought about it often, because all over the world people ask me, “What is love?” I always use the word yoga, as *yoga* means union. And if love has something to do with union, then it is much better if I explain yoga to you.

Yoga is not only certain exercises or breathing techniques. It is a process of union between Shiva and Shakti, the two complementary aspects in everybody’s nature. Shiva represents consciousness and Shakti represents energy. When consciousness and energy unite, a great experience takes place. That is known as the awakening of kundalini.

When I was six years old, I had a fantastic experience. I could see my body but I could not feel it. I felt that I was bodiless. This experience came to me again when I was a little older, and I began to search for an explanation for it. This search led me to many people and to a life that was somewhat different from that of the average person. From the age of twelve or thirteen, I had hardly anything to do with other people. I didn’t even know how to relate to my parents, I felt that I was living with them and that was all. Then, when I

was in the ashram in Rishikesh, there were many swamis of my age, but I didn't have much to do with any of them.

Later, I attracted a lot of people and many disciples became attached to me, but finally they left me because they thought I did not love them. And this is the most common complaint of all the people who have lived with me in the last thirty to forty years. They come to live in the ashram with me, expecting some sort of love which I don't even understand. Not that I misbehave with them; not that I abuse them, beat or kick them, but I do not know how to say "I love you".

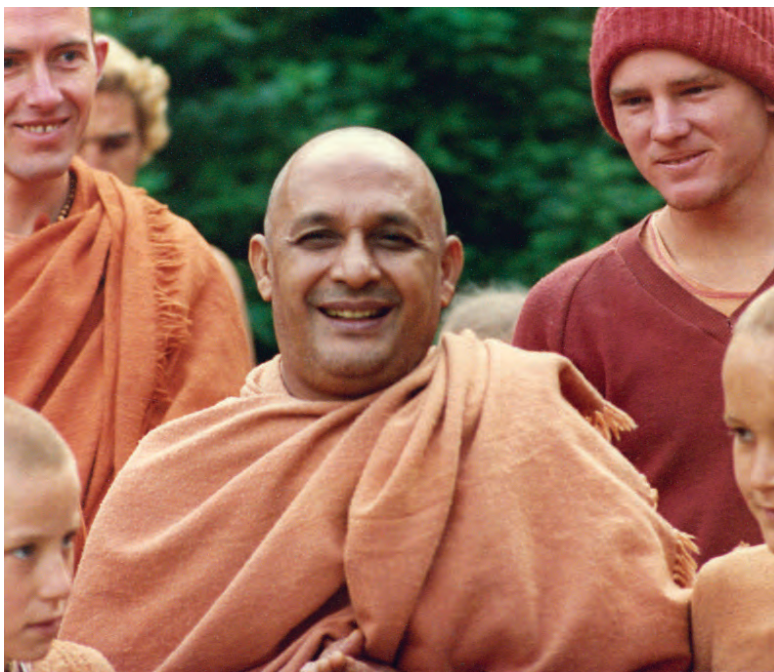
Often my disciples, students and devotees say, "We have so much devotion for you, but you don't give us anything in return." I don't really know what they want from me, but I have thought about it. I can feel for them and care about their spiritual welfare, and their material welfare too if it is necessary. I can think about them in my meditation or when I am practising japa yoga. I can tend to their physical, material and spiritual welfare, but more than that I cannot do. I think this must be because I was born with some sort of defect. That particular mechanical device called the emotional aspect was not fitted into this machinery. Well, that meter is not here so it cannot work.

There was a magazine published by this ashram called *Light of Love*. The first issue was sent to me and my secretary held it up and said, "Light of Love." I said, "No! Light of Yoga", because yoga means union. When two things become one, it is called union. I think love should also mean that. Love is not merely talking to each other sweetly. Love is not just embracing. Love is not merely saying, "My darling, my darling." I've seen the pictures, I've seen the books. Yes, that's romance.

I don't mean to say that romance is unnecessary because many people do need it, but I can't explain that. Just as children need toys, some people need romance as well. But there is a higher aspect of man's mind and consciousness, and we call it union. This union can occur between the two complementary constituents of your personality called Shiva and Shakti.

In the human body, within the framework of the vertebral column, there are two channels passing from mooladhara chakra up to ajna chakra. They are known as ida and pingala nadis. Through certain practices, such as shambhavi mudra (eyebrow centre gazing), trataka, pranayama with kumbhaka, and kriya yoga, the forces of ida and pingala can be united.

When the energies of these two channels are united, a current is created and then the energy descends to mooladhara chakra and awakens the sleeping kundalini shakti. This union is the highest of all unions, and when it occurs, you begin to feel everybody is a part of you and that the whole world is your expansion and expression. Then you do not see the difference between yourself and myself and you do not feel separate from other things. So, this is all I can say about your word 'love' which, in my language, is known as yoga.



63

Maintaining Harmony in the Family

Domestic problems afflict almost every home, and sometimes they seem to increase when one partner begins to practise yoga. During satsang with a group of Colombian yoga aspirants, Sri Swamiji discussed this problem. Recorded at Bihar School of Yoga, Munger, on 6 January 1981.

In order to maintain harmony and cordiality in family life, each individual must possess a balanced mind, and to gain a balanced mind, one must practise yoga on a regular basis. Of course there are families in which yoga is being practised, but still, relationships within them are not cordial. This is because there is another factor to be considered. In a family, either the husband and wife must both have the same regard for yoga, or if not, they must be able to understand each other. It is extremely rare to find a family in which all members have the same way of thinking.

In Hindu families, you will often find that one person practises yoga, but the other family members do not believe in it. However, mutual relationships are not disturbed at all. This is because Hindus understand that everybody is born with his own karma and with his own destiny. However, in western countries things are completely different. Either the husband is trying to convert the wife to his faith or the wife is trying to convert the husband to hers. Seldom do we see a marriage partnership in which this does not happen. In most

cases there is friction between the two and this often results in a disharmonious life together or in a divorce or separation.

Here in India, there are many marriages between Hindus and Muslims, but they don't clash with each other at all. They understand that although the conditions of life have brought them together, they are definitely not cast in the one pattern. It is not necessary for everybody in a family to share the same faith, religion, philosophy or guru. It is not even necessary that if one is a vegetarian the other has to be, or if one is a non-vegetarian the other should also be the same. Just because one partner drinks wine, the other doesn't have to drink it. This is a mistake that has to be corrected in the occidental mind.

Many westerners who practise yoga begin to abstain from the natural marital sexual life. In fact, in the occidental culture, sexual life has always been considered sinful. It has never been accepted as a step towards self-evolution. Therefore, when some westerners delve deeper into yoga, it brings out their guilt and they try to become puritans. They say, "I'm a yogi, I don't eat meat. I don't live with my wife anymore."

Well, I'm not asking everybody to drink wine and eat meat, but I think we have to consider that we are not all the same. The total creation is divided into three categories: sattwic, tamasic and rajasic. Few people have the sattwic temperament, there are more with the tamasic temperament, and numerous people have the rajasic temperament. Now, we do not really have any statistics for it, but we can definitely see that most people are rajasic and very few are sattwic.

If most people are rajasic, then we have to adjust our philosophy according to theirs. If I am rajasic by nature, but I pose as a sattwic person, then I'm going to split my mind and become schizophrenic. That is precisely the reason why many people in the Occident are schizophrenic. They are torn between the reality and their ideal. I'm rajasic in reality. My society is rajasic, my food is rajasic, my interior decoration is rajasic, my music is rajasic, my dancing is rajasic, but I want to live like a sattwic person. So the pull is great, and this causes tension in my family.

Now, in this particular respect, yoga has a very important role to play, but it can only happen if you do not view yoga as a religion or a puritanical philosophy. Yoga is a way to liberate the mind and soul. It is a vehicle for the evolution of the mind. If you practise asanas or pranayama every morning, or you do a little bit of concentration and meditation in a very unassuming way, your partner should not have anything to complain about. But if you have just begun to practise yoga and you are posing as a saint or guru, there will surely be problems in the family. Your partner will become insecure and your children will also feel that their security is threatened.

If you become a yogi and you start telling your children that television is bad and you stop them from watching it, you are going to cause a lot of resentment. Well, it may be bad for you, but that is no reason why they shouldn't watch it. On the other hand, if your children are practising yoga and they do something wrong, you should never say, "Look here, you are practising yoga, you should not behave like this." If you do not allow yoga to interfere with your natural life, it will pave the way to harmony.

In India, the wife may follow one sect and the husband may follow another. The husband might eat meat and eggs while his wife is a total vegetarian. The husband may have a strong attachment to sex while the wife is calm and quiet, but still they continue to live happily and harmoniously. The most important thing is that they do not allow their religion or philosophy to become their ego. If a person believes in celibacy or he follows a vegetarian diet, it should not fatten his ego. If I want to live a pure life and you don't, then we must be able to cooperate with each other. If I don't eat meat but you do, I can cook it for you. I will not eat it, but you should not mind that and I will not mind your eating it.

The greatest correction we have to make in family life is that we have to accept that two individuals are definitely two individuals. At a certain moment of emotion or passion, we may say we are one for the whole life, but this is wrong. Husband, wife and children are different units, different jiva,

different atman. I have my karma, my father has his and my wife and children have theirs. Just as people at the railway station or airport have different destinations in view, it is the same in family life.

Although emotional philosophy and poetry keep us completely hypnotized, we have to see each other as individual units. We must also respect each other's egos or surrender them to each other. In the family, the person who thinks he is the wisest should surrender his ego. That is the greatest role that yoga can play in one's life. Unless the wise surrender their egos, there can't be harmony in the family and there can't be harmony in the world.

Here in the ashram, we have so many people that I have to surrender my ego and keep quiet. Whenever people come to me and tell me some bitter things, I don't say anything. If I'm the wisest, I must remain silent. In the family, if two people consider themselves wise, and they hit each other, there is going to be nothing but dissension. But if they both lay their weapons aside, then there will be perfect peace and harmony.

As you continue practising yoga, you continue to modify your ego. You should read the *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali. He says the problems in life come in a series and they all emanate from within man's personality. The source of all problems is ignorance or *avidya*, lack of awareness. From *avidya* emerges *asmita*, egoism, from *asmita* emerge *raga* and *dvesha*, likes and dislikes, and they lead to clinging to life and fear of death.

Avidya is our inability to assess situations. If somebody abuses you, you immediately return the abuse. If somebody criticizes you, you hit back in the same way. But if you sit quietly and think over the situation, you will realize that you have not assessed it correctly. If you had kept quiet and not hit back, it would have been better. Therefore, we have to strike at the very root of our problems and eliminate *avidya* through the practice of yoga.

Thinking Badly about Others

Here, Swami Satyananda gives some basic insight into the workings of the human mind. He says that negative thoughts can only be eliminated if we change our attitudes towards others. Unless we develop positive attitudes, we will never attain peace of mind, nor will we succeed in meditation. Taped at the Zinal Conference, Switzerland, in September 1980.

Thinking badly about one's own self is a normal behaviour of the mind, and talking and thinking badly about others is an expression of that mental behaviour. If you have a bad smell in the body, that is your bad smell, but it is projected outside and others can smell it. In the same way, if you are thinking negatively, your thoughts are projected outside in the form of criticism. So both these phenomena are interrelated.

In the *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali, there is a sutra: "The most important thing is peace of mind." When you think badly about others, your mind is not at peace, and if you don't have peace of mind, then you can't have good meditation. You may have good concentration in meditation, but at the bottom, the tempest is blowing and it can blow out the light at any moment.

In order to attain peace of mind, you must have an attitude of friendship for the people who are happy and you must have compassion for those who are unhappy. You must be pleased with the people who are virtuous and you should

ignore the people who are vicious. These are the four attitudes you should try to develop when you are dealing with the four different types of people. I will elaborate on these.

When we see people who are very happy and prosperous in their lives, we are usually jealous of them. That is the natural reaction. However, according to yoga, you should make them your friends. If you are a rich person, a great scholar or a renowned person, or if you are happy in every respect with good children, husband or wife, I should not be jealous of you. If I am jealous, then my peace of mind is destroyed. I should make you my friend so that your happiness becomes my happiness. That is point one.

There are many people in the world who are very unhappy. If we see that someone we don't like is facing sickness, poverty, pain or grief, we are very happy. We say, "That's right, he deserved it." When you think like this, you are disturbing your own mind and then your meditation will be affected. The correct attitude is one of compassion. Of course you know he is a bad man, but after all he is very unhappy. That is called compassion. That is point two.

There are many people who are virtuous. They help others, they are philanthropic and they give a lot in charity. What we usually say is, "It's not genuine, he's just doing all this to impress or show up others." Or we say, "He has earned this money through bad means and now he is trying to give it away in charity." By saying or thinking this, you are disturbing the base of your mind and it will affect your meditation. The right attitude is that you should be happy in your heart that he is doing good work. He is helping this institution or that mission, he is very generous and charitable, he is making proper use of his money. If you think like this, you will be happy and that will boost your meditation. That is point three.

Now, point four. When you see a debauched man, a criminal or a thief, you say, "Hey, he is a very bad man. Don't go near him." In any congregation, there is usually one person who talks badly about others day in and day out. This person

always becomes very unhappy and quite abnormal, almost to the point of mental crisis. Maybe a person is bad, but if you keep on talking ill about him, you are only making matters worse for yourself. If he is bad, it does not concern you. You should ignore him, that is the right attitude.

In order to attain peace of mind, your attitudes must be correct. I will give you an example of a person I knew who put these attitudes into practice throughout his life. I lived with this person for many years; he is my guru, Swami Sivananda. He used to serve anyone who criticized, harmed or offended him just like a mother serves her child. He used to treat those people better than he treated his own disciples.

Some of us were very good disciples who were completely devoted to him, but he did not care very much for us. But any disciples who were not up to standard were given special attention. He used to send coffee to their room. Any time fruit came to the ashram, they were the first to receive it, and whenever distribution of clothing took place, their names were first on the list. If there was a congregation or satsang in the ashram, they were always given a special place. And this is how he behaved all the time.

However, there are many people who do not change even if you treat them exceptionally well. Once we pointed this out to Swami Sivananda because there was a disciple who was, in spite of Swamiji's behaviour, persistent in his evil actions. We said, "Your attitude to evil disciples is definitely good, but if they don't want to change, why don't you teach them a lesson?" He said, "No." Then he narrated the following parable.

Once a very good natured person was taking a bath in the Ganges and a scorpion was being swept along by the water. In order to save the scorpion, the man picked it up and held it in his hand. The scorpion stung the man, but he still continued to hold it. Again it stung him. A man who was witnessing this whole game asked the good man, "Why don't you leave that scorpion to die?" Do you know what his reply was? "When a scorpion does not give up his nature, why should I give up mine?"

So, if you want to eliminate negative thoughts, your whole nature must be changed. By attending satsangs you can transform your nature greatly, and this is most important. *Satsang* means association with people where positive things are being practised. You may be singing together or studying yoga together. You may be reading the scriptures or discussing the problems of day-to-day life. This is called satsang, and after it you start thinking very positively.

The opposite of satsang is kusang. *Ku* means bad, evil, negative or devilish, and *sang* means association. When you are in association with negative people or ideas, that is called *kusang*. So, in order to purify the human nature, the most important sadhana is satsang. If we cannot hold a satsang ourselves, then we can read a positive and inspiring book. When I was a student, I frequently read a marvellous book called *Imitation of Christ* by Thomas a' Kempis. Every time I read it, I got some new light. In the same manner, Swami Sivananda has also written some wonderful books which can help you to restructure your whole nature.

We write books on yoga, practical books. Swami Sivananda used to write books on human nature. There is fantastic book written by him called *Mind, Its Mysteries and Control*. When you read that book, you can see your own self as though you were looking at a mirror. Unless you can see yourself, how can you correct yourself? In order to transform your nature, you have to see yourself naked, you have to have an absolute vision of your entire personality. And besides this, certain basic virtues have to be practised and developed. This is how the whole thing goes.

65

The Secret of Kirtan

Swami Satyananda recommends kirtan as the surest, quickest and easiest way to transcend the mind and attain higher consciousness. He also stresses the importance of developing the emotional nature and awakening bhakti if you want to experience God or truth. Recorded on 9 September 1980 at the Zinal Conference, Switzerland.

Kirtan is an important aspect of yoga. Just as tea is tasteless without sugar and spaghetti is not complete without the sauce, yoga is also incomplete without kirtan. Kirtan is not religious chanting and it is not just singing one word many times. It is part of nada yoga, the yoga of sound, in which you produce sound waves and follow them with your awareness. By singing kirtan you are able to withdraw yourself from the body and the external environment.

When you practise kirtan, you are travelling by the jet of emotions, and therefore you do not confront the mind at all. This truth is known to everybody in India. If I organize a seminar in India on nada yoga through kirtan, not less than ten thousand people will participate, because they know the secret of kirtan. In raja yoga you have to fight with your mind, but in kirtan you bypass the mind.

Five centuries back, a great sannyasin named Chaitanya appeared in India. He was also known as Gauranga because he was as fair as a European. He was a very great scholar and intellectual of his time, but finally he realized that the intel-

lect is a barrier in spiritual life. He was intent on developing his bhakti and he found the system of kirtan very effective for that. Whenever Chaitanya sang kirtan, he would go into a trance and continue singing 'Hari Krishna, Hari Krishna, Krishna, Krishna, Hari Hari' for hours at a time. He always had a gathering of villagers following him, singing and dancing as they moved from one village to another.

Since the time of Chaitanya, there has been an incessant tradition of incorporating kirtan with other forms of yoga. Side by side with the rigorous forms of yoga and the practice of meditation, melodies and the tender and delicate yoga of kirtan should also be practised. Learn quite a few kirtans and sing them in a group, not alone. Only a few simple instruments are necessary, a harmonium, drum, cymbals and, of course, your heart and faith. Through kirtan you can liberate yourself from blocks and complexes.

Forget that you are a gentleman, a great man or woman, a professor, an engineer, a scientist or a doctor. These are limitations of personality. They are not your definitions; they are superimpositions. When you say, "I am a professor" or "I am a lady from a great family", you are superimposing something on yourself. When you sing kirtan, you must come down from the pulpit of ego and think "I am nothing." Only if you can maintain this attitude will you be able to transcend your complexes and blocks.

Kirtan is not an intellectual yoga, but each and every sound that is produced in kirtan goes deep into your consciousness. Intellectuals will try to understand kirtan, but for them it is very difficult because kirtan is mainly concerned with the emotional personality of the individual. Although the emotions are not properly understood and utilized they are very powerful tools in the hands of man. Through the intellect, you cannot go very deep; you cannot realize the consciousness. By means of the intellect you can know about God, the truth, and so many things, but you can never experience them.

There is a great difference between knowledge and experience. I will tell you a true story which will illustrate the

point. Once, while I was travelling to Australia by plane, I met an English professor who had written a book on Indian sweets and presented it to his university as a thesis. It was a very beautiful and well written book, and the professor had a good knowledge of Indian sweets. So we discussed the subject for hours.

Later, when we were taking our dinner, I opened a box of sweets which had been given to me by the airline company. The sweets were rasgulas, a very famous Indian sweet. Just as chocolate is your weakness, rasgula is ours. So, when I started to eat the rasgulas, I remembered the professor and I told the swami with me to take some to him. He ate them and he experienced them. Afterwards, he asked the swami what sort of sweets they were. Well, that swami is very direct in her replies; she said, "Read your book."

Now, I am trying to distinguish between knowledge and experience. There is no doubt that the professor had a thorough knowledge of Indian sweets, but he had no experience of them. Intellect is a medium of knowledge and emotion is an instrument of experience. If you want to experience peace and God, you have to develop the emotional side of your nature. If your emotions are blunt, you can go to the temple and talk about God for days together or you can speak about him from the church pulpit, but he will be far from you. However, if your emotions are charged, just by hearing about God you can enter into a trance and experience him. This is because the emotions are the eyes through which you can experience a greater love and awareness.

Therefore, it is of utmost importance that a raja yogi or a hatha yogi must develop his emotional personality. How can he do this? There are many ways, but the easiest, cheapest and safest method is kirtan. From a group of about fifteen people, select one kirtan and one melody and let one person lead kirtan. He will sing the words first and then the others will sing them after him. There should be a few instruments and, in particular, a drum. It is the most important instrument because its vibrations have an immediate effect on the

brainwaves and the blood circulation. In fact, the rhythm of the drum is a sound to massage both the body and the mind.

Sing kirtan for about half an hour, then sit quietly for meditation. If you have involved yourself in the kirtan completely, when you sit for meditation, you will find that the highway is very clear. There will be no traffic jam on the mental plane.



66

Awakening Faith

During satsang with a group of Colombian yoga aspirants, Swami Satyananda outlined the method by which one can awaken one's inherent faith. Once faith is realized there are no barriers in life; nothing is impossible. Taped at Bihar school of Yoga, Munger, on 9 January 1981.

Faith is man's greatest property and it is his special wealth. Faith is the main factor behind man's existence. You do not live by bread or money alone. If you live at all, be sure that you live by faith. At times your faith may be hidden or concealed. Sometimes you kill it, sometimes you protect and nurture it, and at other times you rear it up.

Now, do not confuse faith and belief, they are two different things. Belief is a mental substance and faith is a spiritual substance. Those people who are innocent have faith. Perhaps you have come across some examples of faith in the Bible. Peter could walk on the sea when Jesus told him to, but the moment he doubted he began to sink. It was all a matter of faith. When his faith was high he could walk on the water, and when his faith began to dwindle he lost that ability. Similarly, many other incidents can be cited from the lives of the great saints. If we could maintain innocent faith without any intellectual pollution, there would be nothing in life that we couldn't do.

If you read the stories of the Christian, Hindu and Muslim saints, you will find that all these great and pow-

erful people were from the humblest strata of society and most were hardly literate. Christ was the son of a carpenter, Paramahansa Ramakrishna was employed in a temple as a poojari drawing fifty rupees a month. Swami Vivekananda lived in poverty and often had to beg for food. What was the special wealth of all these great people? Was it intellect? No. Social or political power? No. It was pure faith. If I have faith, I can move a mountain; I can part the ocean or make the sea dry. This faith is a spark of divinity which can be found in everybody.

I believe God and faith are two sides of the same coin. The moment you have realization of faith, you have realization of God; the moment you have realization of God, you have realization of faith. This can also be put in a different way. God is formless; God is an experience. God is transcendental existence. You can't see him with this naked eye or by means of this mind. You can't even realize him by any mundane sensual tools, but when faith becomes effulgent, God is there.

Just as there is a spark of divinity in everybody, in the same way, there is faith in everyone. But this faith is in an embryonic form; it is in a seed state. It needs to be exploded and developed. If you are thirsty and you stand on the bank of a river and just say, "Water, water, water," you're not going to quench your thirst. You have to go down to the river and drink the water. Just because we have understood the greatness of faith does not mean we have got it. It has to be exploded, and that is a gradual process which begins with guru and ends with God. Guru is a man, he has a human frame; a saint or sage may have a great soul, but still he has a physical, material body. When you want to heighten your faith, you have to develop it around a visible form first. That is why you start with a guru, saint or sage. You cannot suddenly develop your faith at the highest point.

If you want your child to be well educated, what do you do? Do you put him in the university? No, you send him to kindergarten. Then what happens? He automatically progresses to the first standard, then the second and third. Then he goes

to high school, college and university. In the same way, faith has to be developed in gradual stages, starting with the guru and progressing to God. In this way, you finally realize the faith.

Intellect is the greatest enemy of faith. I tell you, it is poison! That is why it is said, “Be childlike.” It is not said, “Be childish.” Intellectuals are childish; innocent people are childlike. To be childlike is to have the purity of a baby, the knowledge of a realized man or the vastness of a kind person.

Often people ask me how I work, and although I may not always give them a direct reply, I know that I go by faith. I have faith in myself; I have faith in everybody and I also have faith in the future of humanity. I don’t care if it turns out to be untrue; I don’t want to work out everything intellectually. I have found in the last forty-five years or so of my life that it is futile to try and solve the problems of life and humanity intellectually.

Now, the last word that can be said about faith is this – in the dictionary of faith, there is no such word as impossible. This word ‘impossible’ is not the word of an arrogant person. With full faith and conviction, I say, “Nothing is impossible.” You can eliminate your disease, no matter what it is; you can change your nature overnight, no matter how bad it is; and what’s more, you can be anything in life regardless of what you are today. Even if you are a very humble person with limited resources in life, once you realize faith, you realize God. So tell me, what is impossible?

67

God is One!

According to religion, God is the trinity. This concept causes a great deal of confusion for many people, as they wonder how God can be three. Here, Swami Satyananda explains the trinity as the experience, the experiencer and the process of experience. Taped at Bihar School of Yoga, Munger, in December 1979 during the kriya yoga course conducted for South American aspirants.

Right from the beginning of creation when man started thinking about reality, he began to speculate and form his own definitions about God. Of course, these definitions differed from time to time, according to man's intellectual and mental evolution. When it rained and thunder was resounding all about him, man thought thunder was God. When man used to live in the jungles and the sun rose each morning, he was relieved of the darkness and thought that the sun must be God. When there was disease in society, if someone could perform spiritual healing, he was believed to be God.

Like this, since creation, man has conceived millions of forms of God. Then he thought the king or emperor was God because he was the most powerful man. However, the saints, sannyasins and holy men soon began to tell everybody that the concepts they had of God were their own psychological projections. God was not a man or a woman, an animal or a mountain. He was not thunder, lightning, rain, sun, moon, an

earthquake nor the ocean. He was the supreme experience, and this experience was a transcendental experience.

This transcendental experience has three forms: the experiencer, the process of experience and the experience. Now, these three forms were known by the different names of the trinity. Therefore, there is actually no trinity, there is unity, but man conceived this unity as the trinity. When you look at a picture, you are aware of the picture, and you are also aware that you are the seer and that there is a process of perception. So as a normal person, you are aware of the three whole experiences: the seer, the cognition and the sight. That is why there is the philosophy of the trinity. God is neither one nor many.

Now, what is one? One is a digit, two is a digit and three is a digit. One plus one is equal to two. One plus one plus one is equal to three. We understand God as this 'one'. In fact, God is infinite. What is infinity? It is that which is not limited; it has no beginning and no end. A circle is infinite because it has no beginning and no end. A line is not infinite and a point is not infinite because they have a beginning and an end. The digit 'one' is finite, but the infinite 'one' is the right definition of God.

According to philosophy, one plus one equals one and one minus one equals one, but according to mathematics, one plus one equals two and one minus one equals zero. Mathematics is finite. The 'one' in mathematics is finite but the 'one' in philosophy is infinite. God is infinite so he is not the 'one' of mathematics. When you say God is one, forget mathematics because one God plus one God is not equal to two Gods.

So, when you say God is one, you must understand what this 'one' means. If it is the 'one' of mathematics, then God is one, two and three, but if God is a philosophy, he is only one. He may appear in the form of Christ, Rama, Krishna or Buddha, but he is only one. How can this be? Supposing you take a piece of gold and make it into a bracelet, earring or necklace. It is still gold, the substance remains the same, only the name and form are different. When God takes different forms, they are

still God, it is just that his name and appearance have changed. If he is born in India, he's Hindu, if he is born in Jerusalem, he's a Jew, and if he is born in Spain, he's Christian. Hindu, Jew and Christian are manmade, the substance is one.

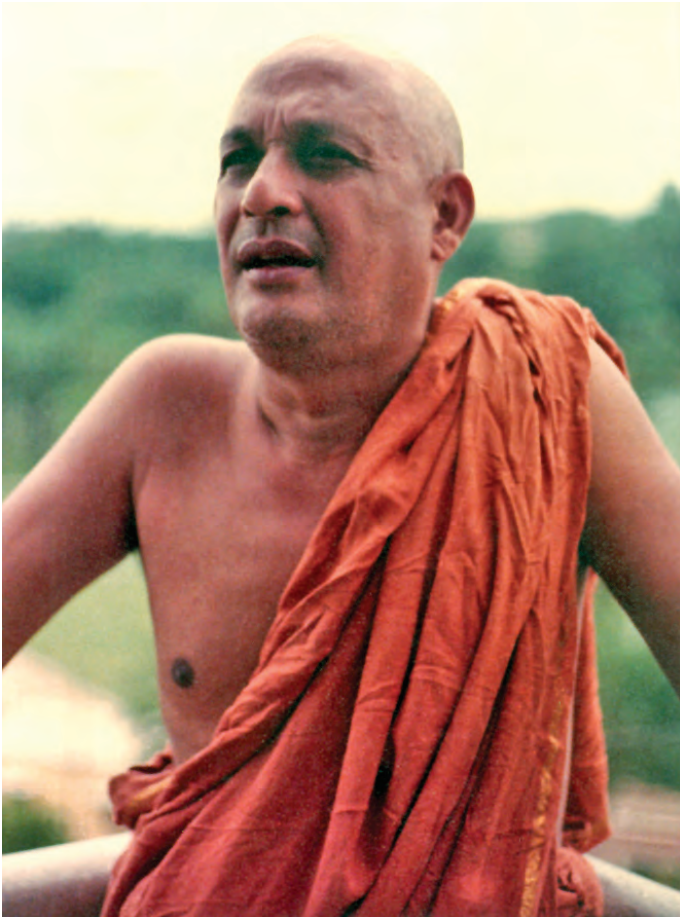
According to the Upanishads, there are two stages of God's existence. One is transcendental and the other is immanent. What you perceive through your mind is immanent and what you cannot conceive with your mind is transcendental. The transcendental God is indicated by the word 'that', and the immanent manifestation of God is known by the word 'this'.

Now, what is 'this'? The whole of creation is 'this'. The sun, moon, planets, stars, all beings, air, ether, fire, water and earth are all 'this'. Therefore, 'that' is what is not created and 'this' is that which is created. These are the two forms of God. The whole of creation is God's manifestation. It's just like an actor manifesting on the stage as a beggar, king, soldier or warrior. In the same way, from the one mind you can create so many different pictures. You see, the mind can manifest in many forms, so can the earth and so can God. From milk you can prepare many different types of sweets, but they are all manifestations of the same milk. From one piece of cloth you can prepare many different styles of clothing, but each is a manifestation of the same cloth. In the same way, the whole of creation is a manifestation of God and is called 'this'.

'That' is not creation. We do not know what 'that' is. Nobody knows, it's beyond mind, intellect, logic and imagination. For 'that', you will have to step out of your mind. You will have to enter into samadhi and transcend the mind. 'That' is the thing for which we practise spiritual life.

Now, God has two manifestations, one is transcendental and one is empirical. Everybody knows the empirical, they see its glory every day, but 'that' nobody knows. The world, the creation, you and I are not unreal. 'This' reality is a reflection of 'that' reality, just as the face you see in the mirror is not unreal, it is your own reflection. Of course, that is not the basis of reality, it is only a reflection of reality. We are reflections of reality, we are not unreal.

So we are infinite. That is why saints say, “I and my father are one.” In Vedanta they say, “I am Shiva, I am Shiva, I am Shiva; I am Brahmasi, I am Brahmasi, I am Brahmasi.” (I am infinite.) Through yoga, meditation and samadhi, you must experience “I am Shiva.” Just saying “I am Shiva” is not enough. It’s no use saying “I and my father are one,” because we have not had the experience. So, God is infinity and infinity is one, not two.



The Three States of Mind

In the philosophies of Vedanta, Samkhya and raja yoga, and in modern psychology as well, different terminologies are used to describe the dimensions of mental experience. Here, Swami Satyananda explains the modern concepts of conscious, subconscious and unconscious in terms of the different stages of samskara, the five koshas and the chitta vrittis. Recorded on 3 September 1980 at the Transmission Seminar, Chamarande, France.

Samkhya philosophy indicates that the mind manifests itself in degrees. When the individual self is experiencing through the senses and the mind, that is called the 'conscious'. At the next stage, the senses and the mind are partially withdrawn, and pranic activities are diminished, but the individual still remembers the experiences of the first stage. That is called the 'subconscious'. Finally, when the senses are completely withdrawn, the mind is not functioning and the pranas are subdued, then the ego goes into hibernation and there is a total experience of homogeneity. There is no difference and no distinction. That state is called the 'unconscious'.

To exemplify it, the unconscious is like a seed. When the seed is in the process of germination, that is the subconscious stage, and when it becomes a plant or tree, that is the conscious stage. According to yoga and Patanjali, the conscious, subconscious and unconscious comprise the chitta.

The literal meaning of *chitta* is 'awareness' or 'to know'. In modern psychology you call it the mind.

Now, this *chitta* functions at different levels. Imagine there is a small cave and a man living in it. He has a telephone, television and radio which bring him all the latest news from outside. Now, supposing everything is cut off; the radio, television and telephone are disconnected. What will happen to the man? He will not receive any further information, but his memory will still retain all the previous information he received. He will think and rethink about it. He will recapitulate his past experiences and analyze them, but he will not have anything new to think about. Supposing the man gets tired and sleeps. Now he is not receiving information from outside and he does not remember the information that is already within him, but still it is there. The moment he comes out of his sleep, he will be able to remember it again.

Now, this individual represents the three states of *chitta*. The man inside the cave is Mr Chitta and the cave is the body. The different transmitters of information are the senses, the eyes, ears, nose, etc. They feed the *chitta* with information. However, during meditation, all these channels are cut off. They are also disconnected during deep sleep. Then, Mr Chitta can't hear, see, touch or smell. He can't experience the taste of chocolate either. However, during sleep and meditation, he still has access to the information that is already within him. He opens one file after another and keeps on moving from one experience to another. This is a second dimension of Mr Chitta's experience. There also comes a moment during Mr Chitta's sleep when there is no vibration or movement and there is no process of knowledge or experience. This is the third dimension.

When all the *samskaras* in the *chitta* are hibernating, that is the unconscious state. When the *samskaras* are in the process of analysis, this prospective experience is the subconscious state. And when the *samskaras* are being received from outside, that is the conscious state.

In Samkhya and Vedanta a different terminology is used for the three states of consciousness. Have you heard the terms gross body, subtle body and causal body? Here the body does not mean this body; it means the totality of your existence. The gross body represents the conscious, the astral body represents the subconscious and the causal body represents the unconscious.

Vedanta and Samkhya also discuss five bodies or *koshas*. They are the food body, the pranic body, the mental body, the psychic body and the ego body. In Sanskrit they are known as annamaya kosha, pranamaya kosha, manomaya kosha, vijñanamaya kosha and anandamaya kosha. These are the dissections of this human body. Annamaya and pranamaya belong to the conscious, manomaya and vijñanamaya belong to the subconscious, and anandamaya constitutes the unconscious.

I have studied the works of the modern psychologists such as Freud, Jung, Adler and so on, and I found they have concluded the same thing. They do not believe the unconscious is really unconscious, they say that it is the unmanifest state of samskara. It is like an unexploded bomb, a seed which hasn't germinated or a light without manifestation.

In Patanjali's raja yoga, you will find a very important sutra: *Yogaschitta vritti nirodhah* – the definition of yoga is to block the vrittis or formations of chitta. This means that the conscious, subconscious and unconscious are formations of chitta and not the chitta itself. They are not the attributes of chitta but modulations of it. Just as bubbles, waves and ripples are formations of water and not the water itself, in the same way, the chitta assumes different formations.

Therefore, we have to try to free the chitta from these formations and modulations. According to Samkhya and the raja yoga of Patanjali, when the chitta becomes free, then it is the purusha, the consciousness; then it is your real spirit.

69

How to Overcome Desires

Swami Satyananda advises us not to fight with or suppress our desires, as this tendency has made many people schizophrenic. Instead, we have to befriend our desires and follow the path of tantra or meditation in order to transform the quality of our mind. Taped at the Transmission Seminar conducted in Chamarande, France, in September 1980.

Desires cannot be suppressed or kept in waiting, and they cannot be finished. Desires are born of the mind and maya, and as such the only way over them is to change the direction of the mind. I will clarify this by an example. A small child plays with his dolls and toys. If one doll breaks, his heart is broken and he cries pathetically, but his mother cannot understand it, after all it's just a doll. Of course the child is unable to conceive that, because he has a limitation of thinking.

Now, when this child is twelve or thirteen, his interests are different. He is involved with his school, with sports and games, and he runs after boys and girls. The dolls and toys he used to play with are locked away in a storeroom. Some of them have been lost and others are broken, but he is not disturbed by this. How did he transcend his desires? It was a natural process. His mind evolved from one stage to another, so his values changed.

When the same child is twenty-one, he is concerned with his job, his flat, his motor car or scooter, having a nice girl-

friend and so on and so forth. If he loses his girlfriend, his heart is broken. If he loses his money, he is distraught, and if anything shatters his lifestyle, he's finished. But he does not care what happens to his toys; they're well and truly forgotten.

One fine day he comes into contact with a swami or a yoga teacher and he begins to learn yoga. Now, cars, nightclubs and good clothing don't matter. Even the situations of life do not mean much to him. He doesn't care who comes into his life and who goes. He just becomes a *sakshi*, a witness or seer. The same person who desired toys as a child, who was attached to his games and friends as a teenager and who was concerned with establishing a pleasant and comfortable lifestyle as a young man, now cares for nothing. How did this happen? Were his desires finished? No. When the consciousness changes, the quality of desire also changes. Today you desire successful meditation and samadhi; this means all your desires have formed a new alignment.

Desire is not a particular thing; it is a force which picks up anything. All desires can be classified into three main channels. Firstly, there is the desire for friends and a husband or wife, that is, for sexual and emotional fulfilment. The second group of desires is concerned with ownership, for example, the desire for money, property and possessions. The third group includes desires for progeny, family or tribe. In addition to these three principal desires, there is one more desire which is only present in a few people. That is the desire to be powerful and famous, for example, to want to become a chief minister, prime minister or president, or to be world-renowned like Dickens or Shakespeare.

In order to overcome these desires you should not try to fight with them; you should not hate them or try to avoid them. You should not do anything in the spirit of animosity. Instead, you must befriend them. This is the first principle in spiritual life. Let me explain the psychological law behind this. If you hate your desires and you want to eliminate them, you create a split in your mind. The mind which is trying

to eliminate the desires is the same mind that is reacting to them; you want something, but at the same time you don't want it. This is called conflict, and the conflict is between the ego and the superego.

When this conflict is narrow, it only influences your day-to-day behaviour, but when it becomes wider, you become schizophrenic and then you may end up in the mental hospital. Many people in the Western countries are schizophrenic because their religion says one thing and their culture supports something completely opposite to that. Because there is such a gap between the teachings of Western societies and the religions, a part of your mind is religious and the other part is social. I will give you a very gross example. Your religion talks about purity and chastity, but what does your society encourage? What does the psychology of Dr Sigmund Freud teach? Just the opposite of what your religion is advocating. Now, in your day-to-day life you succumb to the ways of society, but from time to time your religion comes up and you experience guilt. "Oh, I am so bad, look at the wicked life I have been leading." You are guilty and still you enjoy.

Therefore, you have to deal with your desires very carefully, keeping in mind that you have your religious tradition, and at the same time remembering that you live in an ultra-modern society. You have to do everything in absolute conformity with both. For this reason, I think tantra is the way for you. It does not speak of fulfilment and it does not indicate abstention either. It is aimed at changing the quality of your mind. If you practise meditation or tantra, a change in the quality of your consciousness will automatically occur. Once the quality of your mind changes, desires will exist no more.

70

Suppression

In this short talk, Swami Satyananda discusses suppression in the light of modern psychology and yoga. Taped at Satyanandashram Barcelona, Spain, in August 1979.

Suppression is a discovery of modern psychology which involves the burying of unwanted mental tendencies. Suppression is regarded as the cause of most illnesses and problems, but even though the Western culture has completely abandoned suppression and given free expression to all the senses, still the maladies and the problems continue. There are so many mental, psychological and emotional disorders in the world today.

In modern psychology, the word suppression does not mean what you have been taught by your professors. We understand it in a different way. A child needs toys and dolls. That is his necessity, and if you don't give them to him, that is suppression. When he grows older, he wants to have friends and to play childish pranks. If that is not possible, there is suppression. When he matures a little more, he needs a boyfriend or a girlfriend to fulfil his sexual and emotional life. If you block this, there is suppression. If a boy of eight years wants sexual life and you block it, that is not suppression because that is not his need. If a woman of thirty-five wants dolls and toys and you block it, that is not suppression because dolls are not her need.

Every age has some natural deficiencies known as psycho-emotional urges. My urges cannot be the same as those of a young boy. But if I begin to desire some toy meant for a child, then the best thing is to block it because this is unnecessary for me, just as sexual interaction is unnecessary for a child of eight, or dolls for a grown-up woman. These things have to be blocked. This is not suppression. Suppression means the denial of the psycho-emotional urges of a person.

Sometimes even though you are young, you have two minds or maybe three. This is another dimension of the subject. Mad people have two minds and each has different and contradictory thoughts. When you have these two different types of thoughts, you have to suppress one or you will become schizophrenic and be sent to the mental hospital. In one part of your mind, you may be thinking about leading a spiritual life, simplifying your needs and abstaining from sexual pleasure. In the second part of your brain, there are different ideas, desires for sense objects and more complication. In one way you are a swami, a yogi, but in another way you are a bhogi.

Now, what are you going to do? Delete them both or suppress one of them? You have to find out which is stronger. If your spiritual personality is stronger, then drop the other, or if your worldly mind is more powerful, then suspend the spiritual personality for some time.

Many people think that suppression is dangerous, but in yoga we have had a different experience, and this point is very important. We have found that suppression develops psychic images. If you suppress yourself, you have many dreams and a lot of thinking. Therefore, those who follow the spiritual path should suppress their desires. This will help them in the development of their psychic body, so they will have many spiritual qualities.

Marriage or Sannyasa?

Swami Satyananda speaks on the necessity of accepting one's path in life without suffering from dissatisfaction or guilt. Taped at Satyananda Ashram Medellin, Colombia, on 8 October 1980.

Sannyasa is a special path in which you must be free from family life. There are many people who think they can be sannyasin and householder at the same time. This is a confused and self-contradictory way of thinking. A householder is no less than a sannyasin. Sannyasa is no less than the life of a householder. They are two distinct paths leading to higher experience of life. The moment you begin to think of integrating sannyasa with household life, you are suffering from guilt on account of being a householder only.

There is nothing wrong with being a householder. You don't need to be a sannyasin as a householder. Whether you are a sannyasin or a householder, you must follow your own way. These are two distinct paths according to the capacity, nature and temperament of the person. There are those who are strong in mind, who can live alone without attachments, with no money, property, wife, children, love, emotion, no mine and no thine. They are the sannyasins and this is their path. The householders, on the other hand, live amongst all the turmoil of life. They are happy one moment and unhappy the next. They have family and social commitments, a lot of money or none. They have to deal with anger, greed,

frustrations, attraction, repulsion, and still keep on the track. This is the life of a householder.

Household life is the way of external turmoil and sannyasa is the way of internal turmoil. The sannyasin must face everything within him, while the householder faces everything outside. These are the two distinct paths described in the *Bhagavad Gita* when Krishna is instructing Arjuna about the path of sannyasa and the path of karma yoga. The householder is primarily a karma yogi and the sannyasin is primarily a raja and jnana yogi. Therefore, please do not suffer from guilt. If you want to take sannyasa, I'm ready to shave your head and give you this robe. If you don't want it, be whatever you are, but don't say, "I'm a sannyasi and a householder." This is an example of the Occidental way of confusing capability and guilt.

A householder should be proud of his station in life. A sannyasin must be confirmed in the path he is walking. If either have any inferiority or guilt about their paths in life, then they are finished; they can't proceed any further.

Nowadays, in many parts of the world, there are householders who put on the robe of a sannyasin. They are married with children and they go to the public offices in this robe. This is not a very healthy psychological approach to life. And in my opinion, these people are suffering from some sort of mental imbalance. If you have respect for sannyasa, come out. If you are proud of your station in life, stay there.

As a householder you must respect sannyasins. Learn from them, find out the depth of their mind and intuition and get the best out of them. And if you are a sannyasin, teach the householders, love them, serve them, respect them and get your guru dakshina from them.

What Should I Eat?

Nowadays, food importation and exportation have become big business and people are not eating the natural foods from their own soil. Here, Swamiji explains why our dietary requirements vary from one climatic zone to another. Recorded at Satyananda Ashram Paris, France, on 18 May 1980.

As I see it, the greatest worldwide problem with food is that people do not know which foods are most applicable for their particular country. France has its own climate, water and environment and India has its own. What is good in India cannot be good in France, and likewise, what is good in France cannot be good in India. An Englishman should realize that the food he eats in England will not be so good for him in France, and if a person from Finland moves to Italy, he should not expect the food of his own country to be better for him than the Italian food. However, nowadays, the same dietary habits are being adopted in every country of the world.

The quality and density of bacteria here differ from those of tropical countries. An apple grown in France has a different density of bacteria than an apple grown in Kashmir or another part of India. In tropical countries, bacterial growth is rapid, and as such the diet has to be formulated accordingly. People living in the Mediterranean and tropical zones should eat plenty of cooked and continental food. They should not take excessive protein as it will accelerate the ageing process, and

if their diet provides plenty of carbohydrates, it will maintain their inner body temperature. In the Mediterranean and tropical climates, heat is dissipated and in semi-arctic and arctic areas, heat is conserved. Therefore, even if people in the arctic zones do not eat many carbohydrate-rich foods, it does not matter, but in semi-tropical and tropical areas a plentiful quantity of carbohydrates is essential.

Now, whereas carnivorous animals have short intestines so their food can be expelled quickly before fermentation takes place, we have very long intestines (thirty-six feet in length) and our food should take eighteen hours to pass through the body. During this period of time the body temperature should be constant, otherwise bad acids are formed. When the body temperature fluctuates, not only is there acidity, fermentation and foul smell, but worms find this a conducive environment to live in. Because well-cooked food is less likely to ferment, and we can keep it in our intestines for a full eighteen hours, it is the best for the human system.

The secretions of cows and other herbivorous animals are adjusted for raw foods, and the secretions of carnivorous animals are adjusted for animal foods. Dogs are both carnivorous and macrobiotic; they do not like raw vegetarian foods and their systems are not able to manage such foods. Cows, goats and elephants can take both cooked and raw foods, but a dog will never eat an apple or a banana, nor will it touch salad. It will only eat meat, dairy products and cooked chapati or bread. Now, the systems of human beings are able to cope with raw foods, cooked foods and animal foods. However, our capacity to assimilate animal foods is very limited and our ability to assimilate green vegetation is not much greater. For us, the most easily assimilated foods are well-cooked or boiled vegetarian substances.

To determine what the best food is for a particular country, one must observe what grows most naturally and abundantly in that climate and environment. In Southeast Asia, you will find plenty of rice, coconuts, bananas and other fruits. If you visit the plateaus of central Asia, the Punjab, Pakistan and

Afghanistan, you will find there is no rice, only wheat, maize or corn. So, therefore, nature readily provides the most suitable foods for the people living in every part of a particular country.

In India, there are different dietary habits in every state. In the north the staple diet consists of chapati, vegetables and pulses, whereas in the south they don't have these things, so their preparations are totally different. Remember, India is a country of many climates, therefore it cannot have one type of food. In the same way, France also has a variety of climates. In some places it is cold while in other places it is hot, so you cannot expect the people of both areas to thrive on the same diet.

Besides this, there is another concept. The seasons change from month to month and our diet should be adjusted accordingly. In the olden days, people had knowledge of their dietary requirements throughout the various seasons. In India, this knowledge still exists and, in fact, it is one of the first things we are taught. For example, in the first month of the rainy season you take this food and avoid that, then in the second month there is something else in particular that you should eat and other things that should be eliminated from your diet.

However, the most important point regarding food is that even though we can discuss the subject scientifically, we cannot get scientifically natural food. I often get angry with the modern thinkers in India who consider quantity before quality. I once had a cow which only gave me two kilos of milk twice a day. My neighbour had a jersey cow which provided him with twenty kilos each day. Once he came boasting about it and I said, "Look here, my two kilos gives me so much strength, and your ten kilos can't provide any because your cow is fed on a commercial, packaged diet." Let us hope, now that people are becoming more aware of their health, biologically natural foods will soon be readily available in every society.

73

The Hindu View of Vegetarianism

In this short speech, Sri Swamiji talks about vegetarianism in India. He says that the evolution towards a vegetarian diet was due to the great influence the Jains had on the Hindus. Taped on 10 September, 1980 at the Zinal Conference, Switzerland.

In the fantastic scheme of nature there is a law: life sponsors life. Life is sustained by life, so therefore when you eat plants and fruits, they are converted into prana. They sustain our life, and at the same time they are also sustained by us. There is a continuous natural interaction between various forms of life. As such, you cannot view these things from the aspect of violence and killing.

There is a very powerful religious sect in India called Jainism. Their main sadhana is: do not destroy life. You cannot be indiscriminate in destroying life for your pleasure. Of course you have to live and, therefore, to maintain the life-giving prana, you can utilize plants as a source of sustenance. Jains are so particular about life that many of them sweep their paths clear of insects lest they step on them, and they also filter their drinking water to remove any living organisms. They do not even eat root vegetables. Of course, Jains never eat meat, and because their philosophy has penetrated deep into the spirit of Hindus, most Indians are pure vegetarian.

Jainism is not a recent sect. In fact, they are Hindus, but they belong to a different philosophical branch or sect. The

Aryans used to eat meat like Westerners do, but due to the great influence of the Jains, over the last three thousand years, there has been a constant evolution in the Hindu way of eating. Hindus can never accept philosophically, logically or scientifically that meat is a food. And Hindu women are the first crusaders.

In the Hindu family, if the husband wants to eat meat, the wife will not oppose him because Hindu women have a code of rules. They have to respect their husband's emotions and idiosyncrasies because they accept that they are one with their husband. This does not mean that a woman will start to eat meat because her husband does. She will cook it for him, but outside the house, and she will use a different vessel for cooking. Even the oven or fire will be different. She will cook the meat and feed her husband, but he will not compel her to eat it.

So, for the last sixteen thousand years, the Jains have been saying, "Do not kill; do not destroy any higher form of life. You can eat vegetables, but don't be indiscriminate." Of course this is an extreme philosophy. I am not telling you to do all this, but the important point is that animals are sensitive living beings. We can eat them if we need to, but we should never consider that they exist only for the purpose of providing us with food.

The Correct Diet for Sadhakas

Many people ask Swami Satyananda what the ideal diet is for yoga practitioners. During the kriya yoga course conducted for European aspirants at Bihar School of Yoga, Munger, in July 1978, Sri Swamiji gave the following reply.

When you start practising yoga, it does not matter what you eat or how you live. However, if after some time you decide to delve more deeply into the spiritual path, you will have to choose which way you want to go. You can follow either the path of tantric evolution or the path of raja yoga evolution. If you are proceeding along the tantric path, then a non-vegetarian diet can be used as a tool; it should not be abolished. If you want to proceed along the path of raja yoga, hatha yoga, bhakti yoga or jnana yoga, it is recommended that you become a total vegetarian. However, frankly speaking, the body and mind are definitely influenced by diet, but there is something more to man, and that is his consciousness. This consciousness is beyond the body and mind, and diet has no influence on its evolution.

If you are practising tantric sadhana, a non-vegetarian diet is prescribed as it is part of the ritual. Whereas raja yoga is a passive, quiet and tranquil path, the tantric path is the dynamic way of kicking the energy. It is aimed at exploding the mind into willpower. The tantric uses his mind as a rocket and then forces it out by will. Therefore, a non-vegetarian diet would not necessarily do him any harm.

However, if you are following the path of raja yoga and you want to sit for two or three hours of japa or meditation, it is preferable that you have a light vegetarian diet. When you sit for long periods of meditation, the inner body temperature, which is responsible for digestion, comes down. A non-vegetarian diet requires a greater body temperature for the proper functioning of the digestive process. If the practitioner of raja yoga takes to these heavier foods, eventually he will suffer from dyspepsia, high blood pressure, rheumatism and coronary problems.

With the practice of dhyana or mantra yoga, not only does the inner body temperature drop, but the digestive secretions and enzymes are also reduced. To digest the food you eat, you need five digestive secretions in proper balance, specific enzymes, and correct inner body temperature, which varies in different areas of the body. From the mouth to the rectum there are different zones. In the small intestine a constant temperature is required for a long period of time. In the stomach you need a higher temperature for a maximum of three hours. If there is a higher temperature for longer than three to four hours, you will develop hyperacidity and stomach ulcers. If you have a reduced temperature in the small intestine, then you will have gastric troubles. And if you have a higher temperature in the large intestine, you will have diarrhoea, dysentery or colitis.

So these temperatures are affected by the prolonged period of meditation and sadhana, and if this is a part of your daily routine, you will have to adjust your diet. Firstly, your vegetables should be properly boiled so the low temperature in the body will not disturb your digestion. Secondly, you should add something to the vegetables to aid the functioning of the digestive enzymes and acids and to thereby conserve vital energy. Certain foods, such as papaya, pineapple and bean sprouts, actually contain enzymes. Coriander, pepper, turmeric, aniseed, cumin seeds, cayenne, mustard seeds, oil and garlic are all called digestives because they help the process of digestion to proceed smoothly. Some allopathic

medicines for indigestion are actually made out of these substances. Also, there are many herbs which aid digestion. Peppermint, alfalfa and camomile are probably the best known.

Having made a thorough study of natural foods and having tried them on myself, I have come to the conclusion that a combination of natural and macrobiotic foods is best. I have also discovered that instead of cooking the food in your stomach, it is best to cook it properly in the pan. Five or six digestives should be added during cooking to liberate the enzymes and chemicals which enhance digestion. The combination of heat, digestives and enzymes breaks down the food into smaller and more basic components, thus making it easier to digest.

So now, in conclusion, I want you to remember one very important point. Consciousness is above diet. Whether you eat fruit, cooked or raw vegetables, cheese, butter, beef or ham, it makes no difference to the consciousness.



75

Brahmacharya

Swami Satyananda speaks on the concept of brahmacharya and its significance in spiritual life according to the tantric and vedic traditions. Recorded at a satsang in Bihar School of Yoga, Munger, in December 1979, during a kriya yoga course for Italian aspirants.

In Sanskrit, *brahma* means ‘higher awareness’ and *acharya* means to ‘live in’. Brahmacharya therefore means to move, learn and live in higher awareness, but the religious sects throughout the world have a different explanation of brahmacharya. For them, brahmacharya means complete control over sexual interaction. Therefore, brahmacharya should be understood in two different ways.

In the vedic traditions of India, relationships between men and women, within the limits of righteousness and *dharma*, duty, are considered to be a virtue and not vice. However, in Christianity, the very concept of contact, even between husband and wife, is considered to be an eternal sin. Therefore, the monastic concept of continence is completely different from the yogic concept of brahmacharya.

In the practices of yoga and tantra, brahmacharya means perfection in retaining the bindu. The tantric yogi does not lose his bindu at any cost because he knows how to hold and sublimate it. Therefore, the concept of brahmacharya is mainly to be understood as maintaining a positive

state where the higher energy is not allowed to fall and be ejected. Brahmacharya is not merely a concept of sexual abstention.

Sexual abstention was taught in the vedic religion in order to create a healthy discipline and a healthy social structure. It may or may not help a person to have the higher experience, but it will definitely help him achieve amicability, unity, conformity and purity in his social and personal life. Brahmacharya also gives the physical benefits of strength and power, heat in the system, vitality, resistance, splendour, endurance and the possibility of choosing one's own time of death.

According to the Vedas, one should not touch a man or a woman before reaching the age of twenty-five, because until then the individual does not possess the necessary maturity of the various physical, psychological and emotional functions and aspects of life. Having reached full maturity, a man could successfully understand and integrate the sexual experience into his life.

Therefore, from the age of eight to twenty-five each individual was dedicated to his studies. This period was known as brahmacharya life. Then he was married and lived the life of a householder in a scientific manner. If he had sexual interactions with his partner only, that was also considered as brahmacharya. Then at the age of fifty, the individual was asked to conclude this phase of life so as to enter into another realm of experience. At fifty it was 'Hari Om Tat Sat', no more sexual activity.

So, for the first twenty-five years the individual lived the way of complete brahmacharya or abstinence. Then, for the next twenty-five years he fulfilled his dharma, involving himself in sexual interaction, whether it was for progeny, pleasure or tantric practice. He was obliged to live like that, and even a spiritual aspirant had to fulfil this stage. Then after twenty-five years, husband and wife had no more physical contact and lived like brother and sister, guru and disciple, friend and friend.

The whole concept of brahmacharya is so peculiar. After all, Lord Krishna had many consorts, yet he was known as eternal brahmacharya. On the other hand, in the *Ramayana*, Hanuman, who was absolutely devoted to the service of Sri Rama, was one hundred percent brahmacharya, having no contact with any women. Now then, what should be the definition of brahmacharya? If Krishna exemplified brahmacharya then all of you are brahmacharya, and if Hanuman exemplified brahmacharya, then perhaps there is not one person who qualifies as brahmacharya.

You see, the vedic concept does not merely depend on the external performances. For example, I live the life of a sannyasin and it's a very good life. But if there is something else in my mind, then socially I'm a swami but spiritually I'm not. In the same way, externally you may be married, but internally you may be aware. Then you are brahmacharya, and even though you may have five children, it does not matter. This is the beautiful aspect which is very dangerous to teach, but I will just throw in a hint.

The best definition of brahmacharya is the tantric and yogic definition – having a passionless mind, with an attitude of worship towards women. Give your respect and devotion to every woman, whoever she is. Whatever physical relations you may have with her, they are immaterial. Relationships with the opposite sex can be based on many ideas. You can be a total friend to your wife, your mother, daughter or sister and you can give her immense and total love. Sex is not the only way of interacting. In my personal opinion, there can be no greater definition of brahmacharya than this. All the other definitions have some sort of unscientific basis. Many create conflicts and contradictions, but in tantra there is no suppression, contradiction or licentiousness.

In Western society, brahmacharya is not understood and that is why a lot of problems have developed. Some Western people have tried to become brahmacharya, but the conditions of their society are not suited to absolute abstention. Naturally, those people were not able to manage it correctly

and their behaviour reflected this. You see, sexual abstention has a definite effect on the quality and structure of awareness, but many people suppress themselves and think they are doing a very beneficial thing. Then, if they create a breach of trust in themselves, they become very disappointed and feel guilty about it.

So the whole subject of brahmacharya has to be reviewed and everybody should find its real meaning for himself or herself. Have a total concept of brahmacharya from both the physiological and psychological points of view. Your sexual behaviour is influenced by various hormones produced by the glands of your body. You have to discover how the hormones are released into your bloodstream and passed through your body. How do they influence the gonads, the testes in the male body and the ovaries in the female body? You have to understand these matters. The hormones are released from the pituitary gland in the brain in response to what stimuli? Do they stimulate the testes, and if so how do the testes create seminal fluid? How does seminal ejection create an experience and how does this experience come to an end? How does one fall into emotional states, nervousness and erratic changes in blood pressure? What is the effect of all these events on the state of your mind? All these things will have to be taken into account as you re-evaluate the meaning of brahmacharya for yourself.

Recently I met a person whom I had known about thirty-five years ago. He had never married because he wanted to be a brahmachari, but he said, twenty-four hours a day he only thought of that. He was constantly fighting with himself. So one must live the life of a householder correctly; that is the first way to brahmacharya.

Finally, brahmacharya has to become part of the human consciousness. The best way to be established in brahmacharya and to be divine is to have the tantric attitude of passionlessness, reverence and worshipfulness. In an act without passion there must be mastery over the yogic kriyas, kumbhaka, uddiyana bandha, vajroli, etc. Without this, brahmacharya is self-deception.

76

Tale of Power

Sri Swamiji has often warned us against seeking power, for power makes a spiritual aspirant weak. One night during a satsang at Bihar School of Yoga, Munger, he related the following story.

In my parivrajaka days, I was travelling in Madhya Pradesh, south of Rajnandgaon. There were two village boys with me who were my disciples. We were moving through the more remote areas far from any city or big town. One morning we walked into a small village where we were made to feel welcome, and so we decided to spend a day there. Very soon a kapalik approached me. A *kapalik* is a tantric yogi who uses human skulls as the basis of his practice. He seemed to be very interested in finding out whether or not I possessed any *siddhis*, spiritual powers. He wasn't very impressed with me, though I was humble towards him and told him many times that he was my guru. In the evening he came to me again and we talked for some time. During our conversation I happened to remark, "And what if your wife begets a son?"

A moment later a member of his family came running to him with the news that his wife had just given birth to a son. Well, the kapalik was overjoyed. Such is the way of life in India that if a man begets a son he becomes very happy and proud. Due to my passing that timely remark, the kapalik became very pleased with me. He was so elated that he wanted to teach me everything he knew. Well, I said I would be glad to

learn some of his practices. "What practices!" he replied, "I can give you siddhis." So I agreed to meet him that night. It was *amavasya*, the one night of the month when there is absolutely no moon, and I went along to the graveyard with him around midnight.

With his skulls, the kapalik performed some ritual invocations and then he explained the three siddhis he was bestowing upon me: the power to call down souls and direct them into a woman, thereby making her pregnant; the power to impose thoughts upon anyone; the power to stop human movement.

The next day I left that village and returned to Rajnandgaon. I decide to try out my new siddhis on a disciple. So I invoked a soul, directed it to her and she became pregnant. Soon after I began to feel power-ridden and uneasy, and I regretted my new acquisitions. So I went to Gangotri, took a bath in the Ganges and made a very deep *sankalpa*, or vow, to renounce these siddhis. I did this having fully realized that the power of siddhis is dangerous for those who are affected by them and even more dangerous for those who possess them.

There are many people in the world today who are obsessed with the desire for powers. A person must be extremely steady, evolved and detached to receive and handle power without losing his equilibrium. This is why power is very dangerous and undesirable, especially for spiritual aspirants. If an unripe person acquires or even just desires power, he becomes nervous, irritable, unpleasant, paranoid and generally out of control.

A mature person is able to receive power, yet remain calm. He is able to direct affairs with the attitude of a caretaker rather than a director. Forgetting selfishness and his own personal gain, he is ever alert to the feelings and needs of all those who are dependent upon him, acting in accordance with the situation and the time. Such people rarely seek power, but power often finds them.

Managing Kundalini Awakening

Swami Satyananda discusses the time factor involved in the kundalini awakening, the difficulties in locating the whereabouts of the awakening, and a few rules and precautions to be followed. He also explains how misunderstanding of psychic experience in the West has led many people to mental hospitals. Taped at Satyanandashram Barcelona, Spain, in September 1980.

It takes a long time for the full awakening of kundalini to occur. It may take many years for kundalini to move through sushumna and reach sahasrara. The awakening commences in mooladhara chakra and then it stops at each chakra in turn. However, the experiences occur in the lower centres of the brain and it is not until kundalini reaches ajna chakra that the higher centres begin to function. When kundalini reaches ajna, you do not feel it there. You feel it in the brain because the brain has layers of consciousness and every experience is felt there.

Most people are under the mistaken impression that kundalini is experienced in the lower parts of the body, but the sensual experiences such as pain, pleasure, taste, touch, sight, smell and sound are all registered by the different circuits in the brain. Similarly, each chakra is linked to an area of the brain, and when kundalini is in a particular chakra, then that particular zone of the brain is activated and begins generating impulses. When the specific zones for swadhisthana,

manipura, anahata, vishuddhi, etc. become active, different experiences, expressions and faculties come into action.

As well as ascending, kundalini can also descend, or it may remain in one chakra for the whole lifetime. A child may be born with an awakened kundalini because his parents were highly evolved. It is also possible that your kundalini is already awakened and you don't know it. The awakening may not have taken place in mooladhara; it could have occurred in manipura or in any other centre. Because all the sensations are felt in the brain, you may not be able to distinguish between one awakening and another. Your kundalini may already be in manipura chakra, and the awakening may be taking place, but you could be waiting for it to happen in mooladhara chakra. Maybe the train has already left, but you are still waiting at the station. How do you know where the awakening is taking place?

Most of us are confused and we think that whatever we experience in the brain is a higher experience. We do not understand that all the experiences of the body are felt in the brain. It is difficult for an ordinary person to know exactly what is going on. However, there are a few rules and precautions. Firstly, whenever there is a suprasensual experience, you must immediately make adequate changes in your lifestyle. You must also eliminate all disturbing factors and incorporate harmony and tranquillity. For these particular reasons, many people have become swamis.

So, as soon as you have any suprasensual experiences, you must consult an experienced or qualified person. Your parents and friends may not be the right people to advise you. In fact, in the last one hundred and fifty to two hundred years, most people have been unable to handle it. If you tell your parents about your strange experiences, they might very well send you to the mental hospital for electric shock therapy. You see, the spiritual experience is not known and understood in the West. That is why during the last two hundred years, there have not been many great spiritual personalities in the West. Possibly, they have all ended up in mental hospitals.

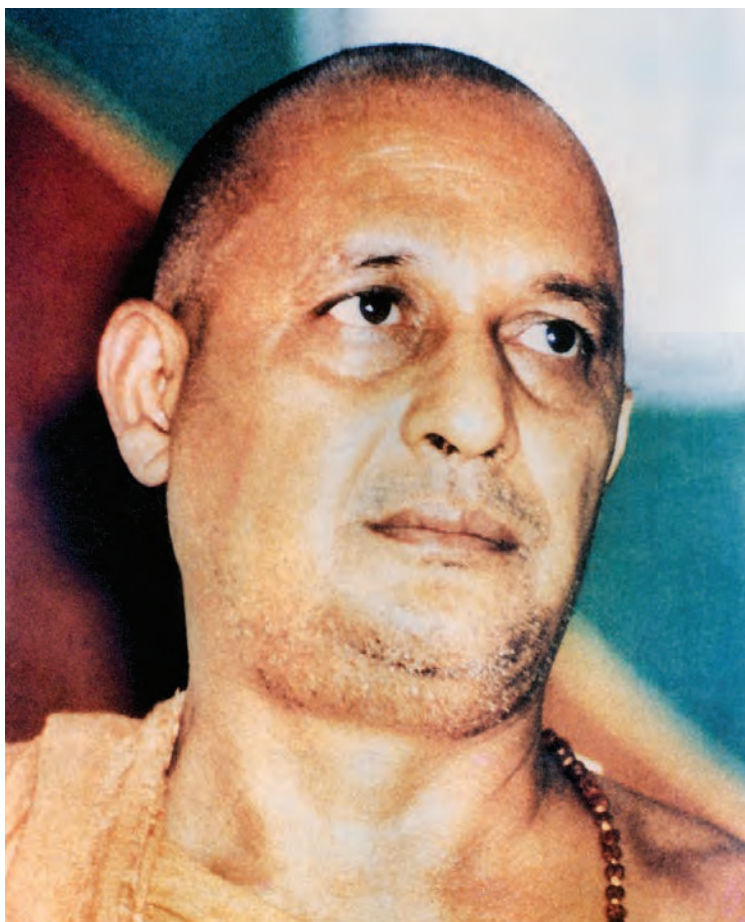
In India it is different. As soon as a child experiences certain symptoms, he is taken to a guru for proper initiation and reorganization of his lifestyle. He is not pushed into married life; instead he is exposed to saintly personalities. If he is experiencing a genuine awakening of kundalini, it can be streamlined properly and he will be given all possible assistance. However, if he is a mental case, he will be helped and made alright. Among Hindus there is great faith that if a child's total personality is devoted to God and he can experience things beyond the mind, that child's whole family is purified and such a boy or girl should be respected even by a king.

So, the awakening of kundalini and the spiritual experience should be treated with caution. If, when you close your eyes, you see light or images, you hear music or strange sounds, or you have some other psychic experience, this indicates some sort of awakening. If such experiences are not streamlined properly, you could end up in a mental institution.

Throughout the ages, many great personalities have been misunderstood and condemned to cruel and torturous deaths. Socrates was poisoned and killed because he did not behave normally. The Sufi mystic al-Hallaj was charged with heresy and his body was torn to shreds because the religion could not tolerate his utterances. Christ was crucified because he was teaching something the people could not understand. They would always say, "What is the sign? What is the proof? It is black magic. How can you say you are the son of God?" Right from the beginning he suffered because people could not understand his psychic experience. The Celts also had this problem. Even during the days of Christian influence, in Europe many monks and nuns were tortured and put in cages. In Soviet Russia, until very recently psychic experiences were not respected, but ultimately they had to be.

Psychic experiences are another realm of mind experiences; they are another form of consciousness. When you have developed psychic consciousness, you do not have to

concentrate, as the mind automatically becomes one-pointed. You may be sitting for meditation and your mind may be jumping about like a monkey, but if somehow the psychic experience dawns, the mind settles down. You can't think at that time because your mind is fixed on one thing. This is called psychic consciousness and if one is experiencing it, this is a definite indication that a different force is awakening in that individual.



Kundalini and Drugs

Here, Swami Satyananda mentions the ancient method of awakening kundalini through herbs and explains why it is no longer being used. He also talks about his own experience with drugs, the photographic memory he lost through it and the reason why he believes drugs will never awaken kundalini. Taped at the Scandinavian School of Yoga and Meditation, Stockholm, Sweden, in May 1980.

In the tantras, various methods are recommended to awaken the kundalini. One of them is by means of herbs. However, this does not mean drugs. The word used in the texts is *aushadhi*, which is translated as herb. In the Vedas and in the history of India and the Aryans, you may have come across references to a substance called soma. People used to extract the juice of a particular creeper plant called soma and take it to induce spiritual experiences. The creeper was only plucked on certain days during the dark fortnight of the moon, then it was placed in an earthen pitcher and buried underground until full moon. On full moon night the pitcher was removed and the juice was extracted and drunk. This brought on visions and experiences of the awakening of higher consciousness.

Similar to soma, there were a few other herbs known in India, but in the course of time they were misused by people who were not prepared to use them correctly. So, to eradicate this danger, knowledge of *aushadhi* was withdrawn. Today we

still know about certain herbs for mind expansion, but we do not propagate this knowledge because it is prohibited.

Although so many people are craving kundalini awakening, man does not have sufficient mental, emotional, physical and nervous preparation and control to do so. If he uses drugs, his kundalini might be shaken and it could suddenly wake up, but if his mind and emotions do not cooperate with him, he could have a very harmful experience.

Traditionally, knowledge of aushadhi was passed on from guru to disciple, but today gurus do not even teach this subject to their closest sannyasin disciples. Some day, when the nature of man changes and we find better emotional, intellectual, physical and mental responses in him, then the science might again be revealed.

So far as drugs are concerned, I have read and heard a lot about them. The only involvement I ever had with drugs was with marijuana. I did not take it for the sake of awakening kundalini, as I have always firmly believed that marijuana or anything like that cannot really awaken kundalini. However, when I was taking marijuana, or ganja as we call it in India, I had a definite purpose for it. At that time, I was not in Rishikesh at my guru's ashram. I was living in Gangotri, ten thousand feet above sea level, where the Ganga river emerges. There it snows almost nine months of the year and the water is completely frozen.

I lived in that place for nine months, and every day I smoked ganja and I practised pranayama for seven to nine hours because it was so cold. After some time, it became unbearably cold and I was forced to come down from the mountain because I didn't have any money and the room I was staying in was cold and damp. When I finally came down, it was discovered that I had tuberculosis. In the course of time I had that treated through natural means; however, due to the use of marijuana, I lost one of the finest gifts nature had endowed me with.

By birth I had the finest photographic memory, and I was very proud of it. With eyes closed I could see and read passages from books in the same way you read with your eyes open. If

anybody gave a forty-five minute lecture in Hindi or English, I could remember each and every word, accent, full stop and comma. I could even reproduce it on the typewriter. That memory was superior, and it was fantastic to be able to reproduce a whole conversation, even including the laughter and accents in brackets. Because of this memory, I was able to learn so much from the ancient texts. However, after my involvement with marijuana, I lost that photostat memory completely. Today I still have a good memory, but it is just average. Therefore, personally, I do not have a very good opinion of drugs.

Sannyasins, sadhus and fakirs in India take ganja from time to time. They put it in a *chillum* (small clay pipe) and smoke it. They have found that by using ganja, the sexual drive is either eradicated, sublimated or disintegrated. Even householders use ganja for this purpose. I also believe marijuana has many medicinal properties and can improve some aspects of one's health. However, I can assure you that it is pointless to try and awaken your kundalini through the use of this drug.

Kundalini is an unconscious force and only those methods which dive deep into the unconscious must be employed. Soma could arouse subconscious experiences and could explode or release a range of archetypes in man, but don't believe that even soma could awaken kundalini.

Supposing you have a bomb. You can't explode it unless you detonate it. There is a particular method for exploding a bomb; it is a science. The same applies to cartridges and bullets. If you forcefully throw a bullet in the air, nothing is going to happen. It is only when a particular process is employed that the bullet will detonate and fire. Similarly, awakening of kundalini does not take place by the use of drugs because they cannot detonate it.

Kundalini is lying dormant in the unconscious layers of the mind and drugs can only penetrate the subconscious layers. Whatever is in the subconscious mind can be brought out, whether it is archetypes, visions, knowledge, telepathy or anything else. However, one has to be able to delve into the unconscious layer of the mind to awaken the kundalini.

79

Kundalini Awakening and Samadhi

Asked to discuss the relationship between the awakening of kundalini and the raja yoga of Patanjali, Swami Satyananda explains that kundalini awakening and samadhi are the same thing. Taped at Satyanandashram Barcelona, Spain, in September 1980.

In the *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali, you will not come across the word kundalini, as this text does not directly deal with kundalini yoga. However, not every saint, rishi or teacher has referred to kundalini by this name. Kundalini is the subject matter of tantra. When Patanjali wrote the *Yoga Sutras* 2,600 years ago, it was during the period of Buddha and about four centuries before the great era of philosophers. At that time, tantra had a very bad reputation in India because the gifts of kundalini, the siddhis, were being misused for petty purposes and people were being exploited. Therefore, tantra and tantric terminology had to be suppressed, and in order to keep the knowledge alive, an entirely different language had to be adopted.

In the raja yoga of Patanjali, emphasis is placed on the development of a state called samadhi. *Samadhi* actually means supermental awareness. First comes sensual awareness, then mental awareness, and above that is supermental awareness, the awareness of your own self. The awareness of forms, sounds, touch, taste, smell is the awareness of the senses. The awareness of time, space and object is mental

awareness. Supermental awareness is not a point; it is a process, a range of experience. Just as the term 'childhood' refers to wide span of time, in the same way, samadhi is not a particular point of experience, but a sequence of experiences which graduate from one stage to another.

Therefore, Patanjali classifies samadhi into three main categories. The first is known as *savikalpa samadhi*, that is, samadhi with fluctuation, and it has four stages: vitarka, vi-chara, ananda and asmita. The second category, *asamprajnata*, is samadhi without any awareness, and the third category, *nirvikalpa*, is samadhi without any fluctuation.

These names only indicate the particular state your mind is in during the samadhi experience. After all, the erosion in mental awareness does not take place suddenly; the normal mental awareness does not come to an abrupt end. There is development of one type of awareness and erosion of another. The normal consciousness fades and the higher awareness develops and, therefore, there is a parallel interaction between the two states.

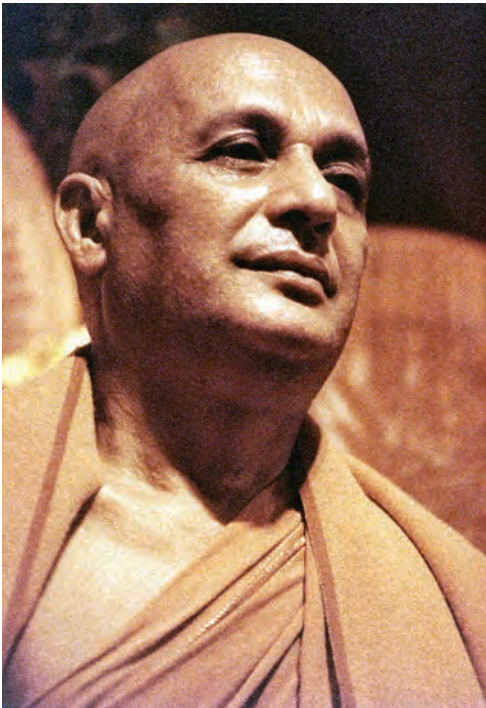
Where does meditation end and where does samadhi begin? You can't pinpoint it because there is an interspersion. Where does youth end and old age begin? The same answer applies. And the same thing happens in samadhi as well. Where does savikalpa samadhi end and asamprajnata begin? And where does asamprajnata end and nirvikalpa begin? The whole process occurs in continuity, each stage fusing into the next and transforming in a very graduated way. This seems logical when you consider that it is the same consciousness which is undergoing the experience.

Now, what is the difference between the awakening of kundalini and samadhi? In my opinion it is the same experience described in two different languages. When Patanjali is discussing the various states of samadhi, he is actually referring to the evolution of spiritual consciousness, or kundalini.

In tantra, sahasrara is the highest point of awareness, and in Patanjali's raja yoga, the highest point of awareness is nirvikalpa samadhi. Now, if you compare the descriptions

of sahasrara and nirvikalpa samadhi, you will find that they are the same. And if you compare the experiences of samadhi described in raja yoga with the descriptions of kundalini awakening, you will find that they are also the same. It should also be noted that both systems talk about the same types of practices.

Raja yoga is more intellectual in its method of expression and is more in tune with philosophy, and tantra is more emotional in approach and expression. That is the only difference. As far as I can understand, kundalini awakening and samadhi are the same thing. And if you understand the teachings of Buddha and the other great saints and teachers, you will find that they have also spoken about the same thing but in different languages.



Beyond this Earth Plane

In a satsang held at Satyanandashram Barcelona, Spain, in September 1980, Swami Satyananda was asked if after death the soul can continue learning and evolving without having to come back to this planet. In his reply, Sri Swamiji discusses the possible activities of the soul after death.

This is a difficult question to answer because I don't know everything about it. After this life, the soul just remains in a dormant potential state; there is no physical transformation. The soul or *atman* has to reincarnate in order to learn, to suffer and to evolve. There is nothing to learn during the intermediate state because the *atman* is like a seed in a bottle, waiting to be planted. Anything that happens to the seed only occurs when it is put in the soil. After this life, the causal body of the individual does not express itself; its whole life is in a state of hibernation. It is just waiting for the right moment to reincarnate. After reincarnation, it then undergoes the various experiences of life that we are familiar with.

However, there are also other forms of reincarnation which are not visible to the human eye. Evolved personalities incarnate into other realms of existence and experience a totally different life. They are like guardians, and although we cannot see them, they are constantly watching us. They live and work only for the sake of helping mankind; their own learning processes have come to an end. If they are to learn more,

they have to incarnate in a human body. Actually, I should not even say in a human body, it is better if I say they will have to incarnate in this plane of consciousness. This plane of consciousness may exist on other planets as well, or even in other solar systems. Or there may be many planets in this universe where there is a plane of consciousness, experience and expression. I don't really know anything about them, but I've heard other people mention them and I've read about them and imagined them.

Here on Earth this is the only plane of consciousness, expression and experience. Here you learn and you grow; you fall and you experience. Here you make mistakes and you also work towards the perfection of your lifestyle. However, once you leave this plane of consciousness and find yourself in the intermediate state, you have to remain quiet. You cannot change the quality of your life, and even if you are there for thousands of years, you will be the same. Change will only take place when you are reborn.

There is also a theory that the individual self can be born on any planet. Well, I cannot challenge this view because I don't know much about it, but I am sure this is not the only planet where there is evolution. Scientists have only explored two or three planets, like the moon and Mars, but so far their investigations have not gone very deep; they are only looking for oxygen and carbon. However, in this fantastic universe of God, there can be other forms of life as well. They may be forms of life which you cannot see through microscopes or telescopes. As you know, a thought cannot be seen through a telescope, yet it exists. Can you see love or hatred through a microscope? If you have lost your nearest and dearest one, how do you feel? Is there an instrument that can disclose your exact feelings?

Now, there is also another theory about this topic. There is existence in the body, but is there also existence without body? We are only experiencing existence in this body, but at night when we go to sleep and dream, we do not know where the spirit is. Maybe it has gone somewhere. It might go

to India each night, or to Colombia or Europe, then before we wake up in the morning it comes back. The structure of the spirit is very complicated and it also has a different field of operation. In fact, there must be incarnations without a body. Where do masters sleep? If your guru comes to you, where does he come from? Where does Christ live? Where does Babaji live? Where does my guru live? Surely they must be living somewhere because when you pray to them, they hear you! They must receive your telephone call because they sometimes come to you. Well, many people have had this experience. This means there is an existence or an incarnation where you can live without a body.

However, the question was “Are there teaching facilities in between the two states?” And my reply to this complicated question is “No.” You have to be born on a plane where you can express and experience. It could be on this planet or it could be in another solar system. Sometimes, when I think about this, certain questions come to my mind: “Are we only encircling this planet? Are we not born on some other planet?” Maybe we are in a similar situation to an Indian coming to Spain or a Spaniard going to India. So when a soul leaves a body, it could also leave this planet and be born on another plane.

In Hindu mythology, it is said that man can take birth on other planets. Hindu mythology contains stories of people being born in a land where everyone has wings, in a land where people don't feel hungry and so on. There are so many beautiful narratives that from them we should be able to conclude one thing – that reincarnation is possible in worlds other than this one.

Interviews with Swami Satyananda

Press Interview

Bogota, October 1980

Swamiji, you are here in Bogota to conduct a festival on yoga and health. Does yoga really help to bring about a state of good health?

Although people were very sceptical about yoga in the beginning, now the whole picture has completely changed. In recent years scientific studies have revealed that yoga does work. The effects of yoga have been studied and tests have shown the influence of the practices on the human mind and body. Besides this, the number of yoga schools opening every day throughout the world is a positive indication that everywhere people are improving their physical and mental health through the practice of yoga.

Do the practices of yoga affect the body directly or do they influence the body through the mind?

The science of yoga works from both ends. For example, the practices of hatha yoga improve the physical health and this influence is transferred to the mental body. The practices of raja yoga improve the mind and this influence is transferred to the physical body. Therefore, the processes of yoga, in general, are both somatopsychic and psychosomatic.

What do you recommend to a person who is suffering from mental and physical illness?

For those people, my personal advice is to devote a few minutes every day to the practices of yoga postures and a little time to yogic relaxation.

According to yoga, what is the human race suffering from?

The main illness today is mental disturbance, which simultaneously affects man's physical condition. Human beings have no control over the behaviour of their own minds. As such, the mind guides them to very unhappy experiences such as worry, anxiety, fear, neurosis, anger, greed, frustration and depression.

Can you say when this sickness started?

Well, sickness has always been with man, but in the last few centuries it has accelerated and become much more acute.

Do you think that human beings are born good or bad?

The essential nature of every human being is sacred and positive. But as he is exposed to various environments and situations in life, he forgets his nature for the time being and acts in a negative way.

When we are dealing with the outside world should we face it straight on, or try to escape from it by going inside? What is the approach?

The external circumstances of life have to be faced through a mind that has been made more capable by the practices of yoga and meditation. The path of meditation is not a path of escape. It is a method of processing the mind and giving it precision and quality. With this transformed quality of mind, you can face any difficult situation in life, not only with peace and tranquillity, but with greater humility and possibilities.

What does yoga say about higher forces?

Yoga is a science which believes in the eternal existence of two forces, matter and energy. When these forces interact, the

whole creation comes into being, not only on this planet, but everywhere in the universe.

What do you think the world is heading towards now, with so much talk of impending wars, violence and disaster?

You have read history and you know there have always been wars and there will be wars in the future as well. But at the same time, the consciousness of man is heading towards higher life. Throughout the whole world, man is becoming more and more aware of his spiritual nature. As such, in spite of the wars, conflicts, death and destruction that are taking place and will take place in the future, the horizon of man has silver linings.

In ancient times yogis always travelled by foot. Why is it that nowadays they go by car, train and plane all over the world?

The saints and sages have always moved amongst the people on foot. That is the tradition. In India this is called *parivrajaka*. For a certain period, the renunciates lead a homeless life, wandering from place to place. I also did this from 1956 to 1963. During that period I visited practically every part of India, Burma, Ceylon, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan, mostly on foot. But since 1968 I have been carrying the message of yoga to all parts of India and the world. Now I have to reach a greater number of people, so I travel by car, train and plane.

Are there any objections to yoga by the people of different countries?

In all the countries we have been to there has been no objection to our entry, to our moving in this way, to our teaching yoga, to our giving mantra or sannyasa diksha to the citizens, as long as we don't talk politics. We can speak in socialist countries on how yoga should be practised by politicians, and they don't object to that. But discussion of political conflicts and differences in other countries creates a real problem.

Do you think if politicians practised yoga, they would eventually leave politics, or would they begin to improve the political situation?

When a politician, businessman, housewife, school teacher or a factory worker practises yoga, it is not necessary to leave his profession. In the course of time, as he develops a better frame of mind and a greater insight into life, the quality of his work improves. He will become a superior politician with greater insight, a more efficient businessman capable of making intuitive decisions, a teacher or professor with direct and powerful expression, a housewife able to manage the affairs of the family and the children.

Can you give an example of such people who are practising yoga in the world?

Yehudi Menuhin, the great violinist, practises yoga. Mrs Indira Gandhi, the most powerful Prime Minister of India, practises yoga. The Duke of Windsor practises yoga. The Queen of England practises yoga, and George Harrison, father of the pop tradition, practises yoga. In fact, there are many great people who are practising yoga in the world today.

What do you think about psychic healing?

Psychic healing is one of the powers of the mind. A mind which has been purified by yogic practices is capable of sending positive healing forces for the curing of oneself and others.

Does yoga agree with parapsychology?

Yes, parapsychology is one of the faculties of yoga.

What is the highest guidance a guru can give?

Love, and to show you the inner path and explain the realities.

Is it tiresome to be a guru?

It is tiresome for many, but for me it is not because I don't feel that I am a guru. My relationship with everybody I come

across is in the form of friend, guide and philosopher. This is a very relaxing relationship which gives me joy and contentment, so that when I die, I can write on a piece of paper that I died in peace.

What is the reason why yoga is so popular in the West?

Technology is very popular in the Orient, and yoga is very popular in the West. This is because western people did not have the spiritual traditions of yoga and eastern people did not have the technological sciences. Man needs both. Therefore, the West is adopting yoga and the East is adopting technology. This is how we are trying to complete our lopsided personalities.

What is the greatest difficulty that you have encountered in bringing yoga to the Western world?

No difficulties, it has been very easy because western people are craving for peace and spiritual knowledge, and eastern countries are craving for technological culture and knowledge. Therefore, the scientific men of the west have no difficulty in exporting their technological culture to the East, and I am also having no difficulty in exporting the spiritual culture to the West.

Does this exportation from East to West allow for distortion of the facts?

When exported to the West, the yogic teaching will be distorted by a few insincere people. But, in general, the majority who are craving for spiritual life will definitely realize the distortion in the teachings very soon, and they will again try to discover the real form of yoga. It is already happening.

Do you think that religious teachings can bring the same advantages that yoga brings?

Religion cannot be practised with a dissipated mind or an infirm body. Therefore, yoga will have to be practised by people who sincerely want to follow their own religion.

Thereby, they will attain peace of mind, concentration and a prayerful mood.

What do you think about Christ and his teachings?

The same as the Christians think. The teachings of Christ were meant to bring man face to face with the supreme reality, to bring him closer to spiritual experience.

What is your religion?

Since I became a swami I have had no religion of my own, but I was born a Hindu. When I took sannyasa, I ceased to belong to any religion or sect. A swami must have respect and adoration for every faith, rishi, scripture and religion. Therefore, I am a Roman Catholic with the Roman Catholics, a Muslim with the Muslims and a Hindu with the Hindus, but unto myself I am nothing.

What should the purpose of practising a religion be?

The purpose of practising a religion is to open the closed doors of the mind and realize the higher consciousness.

What are your personal requirements?

I have to take care of this body for the time being. However, I have no family, no bank account and no number.

If you are totally dedicated to spiritual life, how do you maintain yourself?

My material needs are very few. I need something to eat to maintain the body, and that I get very easily. I only wear two pieces of cloth and I can manage with them for a few years. When you have minimum needs, you have minimum dependence.

Do you ever experience that hilarious type of laughter?

No, I can only express myself in jubilation. I can laugh with you, but happiness is something more than that. Happiness is an experience of the mind, not merely the expression of

the emotions. It is an inner experience or feeling. If you want me to join you in joy and jubilation, I can always do that, but laughter is not necessarily an indication of jubilation.

Is the love match accepted in yoga? How have you experienced love?

You see, I have received so much love from people and I have given love to so many people that I don't really need just one person to give me love or to take my love. I have very much love in me and I also receive very much love, but I know that I cannot receive from one person and give to one person only.

As such, love is not anti-yoga. On the other hand, yoga improves the quality and the quantity of love so much that you are able to give to many people, not only your girlfriend or boyfriend. Well, all are my girlfriends and boyfriends.

Is there any rule that prevents you from getting married if you ever want to?

No, I can marry any time. My religion will not excommunicate me. Man is born free, and his religion cannot bind him. I became a swami by my own free will and decision. If I think that married life would be a better way for me to realize the higher values of life, I can always do it. There is no religious rule that forbids me.

Does that mean you have never thought that marriage would be the best thing in life for you?

I have thought about which way would bring the best expression to life, marriage or sannyasa. Ultimately, I came to the decision that I don't really need marriage as such, because there is no fun in it.

How many hours do you sleep?

Whenever I get time I can sleep. But generally I sleep for about three to four hours.

In yoga is one meant to practise discipline or sacrifice?

Discipline is imposed and sacrifice is spontaneous from within. Yoga is a discipline, but the disciple practises it as a sacrifice. Discipline is a social institution and sacrifice is internal and spontaneous.

Could you explain a little bit about the new psychic race?

Today people are practising yoga throughout the world and as a result they are becoming more spiritual. Their minds and consciousness are changing. In time, these people should influence the future generations so that they are based on spiritual concepts, rather than materialism. That race, known as the psychic race, will flourish in the Aquarian age.



Radio Interview – Part 1

Belfast, May 1980

How would you describe yoga to someone who doesn't really know anything about it?

Yoga is a system of practices which influence the physical body, the mind and the deeper realms of human emotion.

Could you tell us how these practices have affected you personally?

These techniques have helped me to understand myself and to develop my mind in order to fulfil the ambitions and needs of my life.

Do you feel that you still have more to learn about yoga yourself?

Well, I don't need to learn about yoga, but I have to maintain yoga.

Is your whole life yoga?

My whole life is influenced by the spirit of yoga although I do not need to practise it all the time. I also direct enormous yoga institutions all over the world.

What is your own background? You came into this as a child?

Yes. I had certain spontaneous experiences when I was six, which could not be interpreted. They came to me often. Fortu-

nately, my father was a very simple man who understood that these were not symptoms of psychological or physiological illness, but were in fact higher experiences. So he did not do anything about them.

When I was older, I began to wonder what exactly these experiences were. I studied the mind and the body, and came to the conclusion that they were wonderful and fascinating, and that I must make a further study of them.

So, I came to the ashram of my guru, Swami Sivananda, who was himself a medical doctor. I lived with him for twelve years and studied the science of body and mind, and the science of spirit as well. I streamlined my intellectual, emotional and psychological processes. That is how I entered this path.

And has this been your way of life ever since? Haven't you ever done anything else?

I have done everything from time to time. I used to do agriculture in the ashram as well as office work, accounting, typing, editing, translating, printing, monotype composing, construction of the ashram buildings and even electrical engineering. I have done a little bit of everything.

So you haven't been removed from society, as some people might think?

No, actually that is a misunderstanding. In fact, anywhere, even in the Christian, Hindu and Buddhist monasteries, the monk is not removed from reality. He participates in the life of the institution, as a doctor, a writer, a director, an accountant or an agriculturist. And if he is a simple man, he can work in the kitchen or garden.

Everyone I know who practises yoga certainly claims to have acquired a certain measure of peace. Why is yoga peace-giving?

Yoga is a system which involves the physical, mental and emotional techniques of postures, breathing exercises, concentration, meditation and relaxation. These practices

influence all the different areas of man's existence – the body, the mind and the emotional aspects. Therefore, tranquillity, peace of mind and stability can be easily acquired through the various practices of yoga.

So to practise yoga you must be aware of the relationship between your mind and your body?

Body and mind live in interaction with each other, but technically we have to separate them in order to explain their roles in our lives. Restlessness of mind can be caused by physiological factors, and at the same time a disease originating in the body can be created by mental and emotional factors.

What is the first step in the practice of yoga? If I come to you to learn how to achieve mental and physical harmony, what is the very first thing you will say to me?

Primarily, the whole thing depends on one's need. I suggest that one should start yoga by involving oneself in yoga postures and breathing exercises.

What do they do for you? Do they simply relax the muscles?

There have been many scientific examinations of the effects of yoga postures on the body. It has been found that they influence both the endocrine secretions and the central and peripheral nervous systems.

When you learn the techniques of yoga, at what stage do their effects begin occur?

The rewards of yoga are very immediate insofar as relaxation is concerned. One can sometimes achieve it the very first day. But when it comes to the area of concentration, it takes a bit longer, maybe a few years. In relation to certain long standing chronic diseases, it also takes time, anywhere from a week to a few years. It mostly depends on the teacher's understanding of the nature and cause of the disease.

How important is the spiritual side of yoga today? Do you stress it in your teachings?

Yes, I do stress the spiritual side because that is one of the demands of people. If I just talk about therapy exercises or psychosomatic illnesses, people say, "No, we want something more as well." So I have to teach them the rest.

But, do you find that you cause conflicts with religious leaders and ministers?

Not once; it has never happened.

They don't feel that you are attacking their role because you are emphasizing the spiritual?

No, not at all. On the other hand, if I talk to a Christian, a Hindu or a Muslim about spirituality, he begins to take a keener interest in his own religion. People have forgotten the real meaning of their own religion and yoga has been able to resurrect their faith. I don't believe in bringing people to my way of thinking; you have your own belief, he has his and I have my own. Why should I disturb your psychological, emotional and spiritual base? But then, if you don't have faith, or have never thought about religion, at least I can speak to you in a convincing way so that you may start thinking about it.

And then I have to make up my own mind?

Sure.

Yet yoga seems to have connotations of the mystic and therefore the religious. What exactly is the connection between yoga and religion? Is yoga a religion itself?

Yoga is a science and it helps man, whether he belongs to a particular religion or to no religion at all. As such, the experience of yoga should not be confused with individual religious preferences.

Does yoga interfere with or seek to change existing religious beliefs?

Not at all. As I told you, it is a science. It seeks nothing more than to alleviate the physical, mental and emotional disorders that man is facing today.

And yet I have the impression that involved in the practice of yoga there are also the elements of incantation, ritual and something called a mantra which you keep in your mind all the time. Aren't these things common to religions?

I don't think so. Strictly speaking, yoga is comprised of postures, breathing techniques, the psychic sleep and the practices of concentration in order to contact or communicate with the deeper archetypes in man's consciousness.

What is the most obvious benefit of yoga that you have seen over the years?

During the twenty-five years that I have been teaching and preaching yoga all around the globe, I have found that first of all, it brings man to an absolute state of health and gives him an experience of relaxation, and thereby the freshness to cope with the demands of day-to-day life.

It certainly seems to bring tranquillity.

And energy as well.

Does it cure disease?

Experiments being conducted in different countries have shown that yoga can manage – I will use the word 'manage' at the moment, not 'cure' – some of the chronic ailments like diabetes, asthma, rheumatism, migraine and indigestion.

So yoga can stand up to modern scientific scrutiny?

Yoga is itself an ancient science which I am introducing again today on the basis of modern scientific examinations and investigations. These studies indicate that the yogic postures, breathing system, concentration and meditation have a defi-

nite influence on the processes of the body and mind, finally affecting the disease sequence, whether physical, mental or emotional.

Science too is quite ancient, but we have been convinced of its greatness, not because it is ancient, but because it has had such astounding results. Now studies have shown that the practice of pranayama has a beneficial effect on the blood pressure, the cardiac system, the behaviour of the brain, and the electrical impulses being generated in specific parts of the body.

Most people believe that when they are doing yoga they are simply doing exercises, but you seem to be going much further than that.

Although I teach all of the classical yoga practices, I explain them in a new and different way. I tell the students that they are not just doing muscular exercises; they are also trying to influence the endocrine glands, harmonize the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems, and increase the peristalsis in the intestines.

Tell me a little bit about the history of yoga. Why does it seem to be so much a part of the Eastern culture?

We have to trace the origin in history. Yoga was a universal way of life many thousands of years ago. We can even find traces of yogic culture as far away as Latin America. But the political accidents which occurred from time to time made great changes and erased this culture from most places. In India people were able to protect the yogic culture because they had a different way of life. Now that the climate is very suitable and people need yoga more than before, it is re-emerging.

You said that yoga is an ancient science. Is it used in the same way now as always?

Today yoga is being used in those countries where there is more stress and strain and less relaxation. In previous eras,

people did have not much tension and they used to practise yoga for spiritual illumination. Now people are practising yoga to release their physical, muscular, mental and emotional tensions.

Is it true that people living a rural life find yoga easier than those who live in the cities?

I've concluded it is the other way around. In the modern cities like Bombay, Tokyo and Bangkok, people find it easier to understand the purpose of yoga than do their counterparts in the rural east or rural west. This is because the people have become much more conscious of the tensions that build up in the cities and they are feeling the stress and strain of the modern way of life.

In India, is yoga practised by everybody or is this a misconception?

Indians practise according to their temperament and their customs. The Indian way of life is still mainly rural, and therefore they have different needs. Of course they practise meditation and pranayama for spiritual evolution, but they don't really need relaxation, so they don't practise it.

Is it possible to go too far with yoga? Can one become so tranquil and so at ease with oneself that he wants to drop out of life completely?

That's the wrong effect as far as I'm concerned. The higher aspect of yoga which you refer to is the liberation of energy in man's deeper mind. The deeper mind, another layer of human consciousness, has a dormant potential source of energy which can be used for creative intelligence. If through yoga and profound meditation, one can contact that area of energy, one can bring out greater forms of knowledge and experience for the betterment of humanity.

How would you react to those people who say, if you pardon me saying so, "Yoga is just mumbo-jumbo. Well, perhaps

it has a few exercises which are useful for the body, but basically it's way out of touch?"

I certainly would not hit them. I would sincerely accept their initiative in introducing people to yoga exercises. At least they have done that much. Now, it is up to the aspirant, the student, to become aware and find out if there is something more he has to do or something deeper he has to understand.

So that has to come from him?

Sure.

And you are not forcing him?

No.

So you are saying your knowledge is there if people want to come and draw from it?

Indeed.



Radio Interview – Part 2

Belfast, May 1980

Swamiji, I am sitting here in what you would probably call a fairly tense posture because I am involved in a job which requires a lot of adrenaline. Supposing you have been given the task of making me relax in what I am doing. What is the very first thing you would say to me?

First of all, before starting your work in the morning, concentrate on your natural breathing process for about ten minutes.

Do you mean I should stand in front of the bathroom mirror for ten minutes and breathe deeply?

No, you can do it while sitting on a chair. It's not necessary to close your eyes. Just become aware of the inspiration and expiration of the natural breath.

But I find that if I do something like that, or if I lie in bed with my eyes closed before I get up, that all the tasks, problems, difficulties and excitements of the day begin to loom up and get a hold of me and wreck my concentration.

That's what we want. These things have to come out. That's how we get rid of the tensions; they are within you and they have to be brought out into the area of conscious experience.

But in my particular job, if I sit on a chair with my eyes closed, breathing deeply, aware of my breath going in and going out, I can't help remembering that at 2.30 I have a long, difficult interview to do, and at 3.30 I have an even more difficult interview with the bank manager, or the guy who hasn't repaired my car, or whatever. These thoughts and problems impel me to stop relaxing. I feel I must get up and continue with my journey and do something about it. Now how can I use yoga to make that a more rounded experience?

The practice of yoga brings the causes of tension from the depths of your mind, and therefore has two sides. One is the practical side; another is the side of consequences. When you are concentrating on the breath and at the same time thinking about the work pending before you, you are bringing tensions up to the surface, and that creates a state of relaxation in the brain after the practice is over.

But I've got to be tense to do my work, just as an athlete needs the adrenaline, the tension, the stress, to bring out the best in him. It's been said many times that if an actor doesn't have stage fright before going on stage, he's going to have a poor show. Obviously, he should be able to channel this tension into a more controlled flow, but I think that in television or radio production there must be an element of stress to bring out the best in people.

Well, I don't completely disagree with you, but I would put it a different way. When you have to perform a task you have to be very attentive, and you have to unite all your psychological and emotional energies with the idea of the work. But at the same time, if there is some sort of tension which is creating turbulence, that can also detract from the quality of the work.

Let me ask you, Swamiji, you address huge meetings of people, perhaps thousands at a time. How do you feel when you address them? Surely you must be nervous?

No, never.

Why not? How do you cope with it? There is even a saying here about horses, that the thoroughbred trembles at the starting post while the plough horse never does.

Before I go in to attend and address these meetings, I attune myself with a mental state of calmness and thereby I know what I have to do, how I have to speak and what I have to say.

Are there no nerves in you at all? You are quite calm and tranquil, at one with yourself, your mind and your body in harmony?

Yes, when the mind is totally attentive, there is no turbulence.

But there is a basic difference in your presentation and mine. Yours is basically one of dispensing pure information for people to absorb. But I'm also an entertainer; if I sound dry then the program dries up with me. All very well and good for a lecturer or a teacher to be extremely calm, but it doesn't always provide the best entertainment, don't you agree?

I am not only a teacher, I'm a director of a worldwide institution involving many forms of activities besides teaching. I have hundreds of teachers under training, and more than two hundred centres and schools. I have to run the finances, banking, taxation and all kinds of things. And I travel almost all year round to different countries, meeting people. I've got to be very attentive, but I make a distinction between 'tension' and 'attention'.

Dr Ian Banks is here in the studio with us. Let me ask you both about the relationship between yoga and disease.

Experiments have been conducted in different countries, and many good books have been written on this subject. I have been personally involved in seminars on diabetes, asthma, high blood pressure, rehabilitation after myocardial infarction, and many other diseases. I have found that if the teacher is expert in the job and can diagnose the disease very well in relation to the patient, then he can arrest the disease.

Ian, what do you think about Swamiji's approach?

Dr Banks: Of course, a physiological disorder is often associated with some psychological disorder, but how far can you take this? I mean, do you make the same claims with infection as with infarction?

Swamiji: Well, of course sometimes disease originates in the physical body and sometimes in the mental. In any case, it overwhelms both areas of man's life. If it originates in the body, it travels to the mind and back to the body again. Or if it originates in the mind, it travels to the body and back to the mind.

***Dr Banks:* But you still haven't actually answered the question. How far do you think yoga can actually be used for, say, infection or a very simple psychological disorder?**

Not all diseases respond equally well. However, yoga is definitely useful in the management of diseases like diabetes, asthma and rheumatism.

What about cancer? What can yoga do for that?

Nothing has been proven conclusively, although a lot of work on cancer is going on. In particular, Dr Ainslie Meares, an eminent Australian psychiatrist, is dedicated to finding a way to treat cancer through yoga.

You mentioned diabetes – have you had any personal contact with anyone who has had diabetes and has improved with yoga?

Yes, I have assembled quite a few case histories. In India we have seminars for diabetics and asthmatics which are supervised by medical people who are experts in that area.

***Dr Banks:* My own research is into diabetes. It's a unique and fascinating disorder, a disorder of the hormones. More and more investigators are finding that there is some connection between the brain and the parts of the body which control diabetes. There is evidence that meditation and**

yoga affect a large number of the, shall we say, more exotic endocrine functions.

After all, the entire function of the hormones is controlled by the brain. Even the production of insulin in the physical body must have some connection with one of the nervous systems. If this nervous system fails, the body is not able to produce the right hormones.

***Dr Banks:* But I think you've taken it a bit far, and this is again the problem of how to decide where the dividing line is. Diabetes is a well established disease. It has a physiological basis, and possibly a psychological origin as well, but I think it's more likely to be a straightforward physiological disease, possibly inherited. This is where we have to be so careful we don't say to people, "Look, by the use of yoga we can cure you. Forget about your insulin injections, your constant diet and so on."**

If we are going to use yoga, we have to bring it within the established medicine we have at the moment, which is, after all, extremely successful. It could be more successful if we trained people in yoga, but it must be used in conjunction with medicine, and we must not raise false hopes in the patients.

I agree. Throughout my writings I have been very careful not to use the words 'cure' or 'treatment'; I say 'management'. I think yoga is a system which helps us to manage the disease. Whatever the cause, physiological malfunctioning, stress and strain, a constipated system or disharmony in the hormones, we have been able to help a lot of patients come out of the crisis that is known as diabetes.

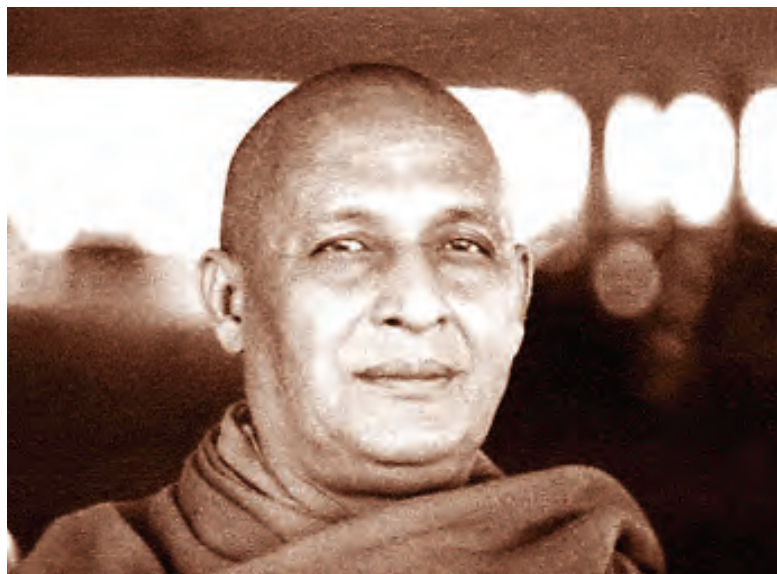
Ailments like depression, nervous breakdown and anorexia are related to a person's self-esteem. If I were a yoga practitioner, how would my opinion of myself change?

In yoga we make one point very clear. If a disease originates in the body, it travels to the mind and then back to the body

again. If it originates in the mind, it travels to the body and then back to the mind again. In any case, any sickness that we are suffering from is not only physiological or psychological, it is both. Body and mind interact with each other. Therefore, in conditions such as nervous depression or anorexia, we put together a combination of exercises which include physical postures which affect the hormonal secretions, breathing practices which remove respiratory congestion and purify the blood, and finally psychic sleep, in which the deeper realms of the body and mind are relaxed.

Do you yourself ever get any physical upsets like indigestion or headache? And if so, how do you cope with them?

No, I never get them. I sleep well and eat well. I don't get headaches or constipation. I can manage myself in every situation of body, mind and spirit. That is the result of my personal training with my guru, who was himself a great doctor as well as a great yogi.



Interview with New Age Magazine

Helsinki July 1981

What question should a sincere spiritual seeker ask himself before entering the spiritual path?

He should ask himself what he wants. Does he want siddhis or ecstasy, to lose himself in the depths or to know the totality of what he is? That is the first question he should ask.

What would you answer?

It depends on the pupil. Not everyone can ask questions about samadhi. Pupils belong to different grades and categories, and different questions come to their minds according to their own personal evolution. We accept everything as all right.

In yoga practices and meditation, many experiences come, and some of them are quite difficult to understand. What should one do about them?

First of all, the experiences that follow meditation do come to most people. The only thing that is required is an interpreter, guru or teacher. Supposing you have some kind of awakening accompanied by a blast of experiences. Then, the next morning you feel completely absent-minded. You don't want to work, eat or talk. What to do? Now, most people would tell you to try and come out of it, but in fact you should not try to change your state of consciousness because it is the outcome of a blast of experiences.

If you go to your guru, he will say, "Sit down and don't have anything to eat. You must fast for ten to fifteen days, because the blast of experiences has shot chemicals into your bloodstream which are temporarily suppressing the liver action. But after a few days of rest you will automatically feel better. So don't be frightened, just sleep in your room. After ten days you will be able to go to work again."

However, if no spiritual guide is there, then someone who misunderstands the situation may tell you, "Hey, you'd better see a doctor about this!" That is what happened to me. When I was six I had such an experience. I saw the body but I did not feel it. Of course, it was peculiar experience, so I spoke to my father about it. He understood what was happening, but the other family members took me to a healer. Fortunately, at that time the doctors were not very experienced, so I was saved. I did not have my brain or spinal cord operated on and I was not treated with drugs. It happened twice or thrice more. Later I came to wonder what it was. I began to question myself, and went to ask many learned people, but they could not explain this experience to me.

**Could you tell us a little about your own spiritual search?
How did you come to Swami Sivananda?**

I came to Swami Sivananda because I was wanting to find a person who not only knew but also had personal experience of spiritual life. I had many deep difficulties in my spiritual life. At one stage I reached a point in my awareness which I could not surpass. I encountered a veil and was not able to go beyond it. So, during my twenties that problem which I faced in the realm of my inner consciousness led me to many people. But I was not convinced by anyone, in the sense that none of them made any difference in my life. I had read many books and been a student of philosophy, both Eastern and Western. I also came in contact with many good people who were very sympathetic, compassionate, charitable and merciful. I found they had ethical and moral qualities, but I could not find their spiritual qualities. They could not clarify or solve my problem.

When I came to Swami Sivananda in Rishikesh, he asked me, “Why have you come here?” I told him that in my spiritual practice, I had arrived at a certain point I was not able to go beyond. He said, “Stay here in the ashram and work hard.” So I stayed for twelve years. When I was finally able to get over the veil, my purpose of living with him was fulfilled, and I left the ashram to live a mendicant’s life. This is how nature transpired in my life.

Do you have any personal memories of Swami Sivananda, who was one of the greatest yogis of this time?

Oh, hundreds of memories – sometimes when I am in the mood I tell people so many things. His every action, whatever he did, the way he lived, was in itself a commentary on the great truths of yoga, Vedanta and tantra. Of course, he was my guru so I cannot compare him with other great saints. But I felt that he was unique because, although he lived on higher plane of consciousness, he operated very efficiently on the normal plane of consciousness at the same time.

When you started your own ashram in 1964, there was a big exchange of spiritual movements between East and West. Now, seventeen years later, how do you see this process developing?

In recent years, people have reached a point where they have become aware that material life cannot be the ultimate form of life; that man has to follow an inner path, not only for samadhi and realization but also for his physical, emotional and mental wellbeing. In the last twenty years or so, in every stratum of society, the spiritual influence on man’s personality is being talked about everywhere.

Now, in our decade, people have become aware of the effect of the transformation of consciousness on human behaviour. In drug rehabilitation centres they are saying, “Unless you can transform the mind you cannot do anything to prevent addiction.” In the jails and corrective institutions they are saying, “But what are we going to do with these criminals?”

You cannot change them. You have to give them something else.” Where there is corruption in the police or the military, you cannot stop it. The only way to stop corruption is to do something to change the inner consciousness. Yoga is able to transform the inner personality, whereas other methods simply don’t work.

Are the people who come to you now different from those who came earlier?

No, they are not different. The difficulties are the same – physical, emotional and spiritual, but the number is growing and acceptance is increasing. Formerly people wanted to be convinced logically, but now they come to me already convinced so I have less work to do.

What do you think a person’s aim should be when he practises yoga?

When you practise yoga, your ultimate aim should be to integrate the different planes of your personality and to evolve your consciousness in order to gain greater knowledge of yourself.

Nowadays, yoga comes to the West in many forms such as therapy, health exercises, etc., but very seldom does it come in its pure form. Could you comment on that?

Much depends on the students. For example, in the beginning I used to discuss philosophy and Vedanta; but then I was compelled to talk about therapy because the people needed that. In our society there are many people who suffer mentally, so I am compelled to teach that aspect, even though in my mind I am more concerned with philosophy. I prefer to teach the yoga or Samkhya sutras, but the people come to me with immediate problems which must be dealt with. If a man comes with a backache, epilepsy or nervous breakdown, I have no choice but to help him. So whether yoga comes in the form of relaxation, therapy or in any other way is not so much determined by the quality of the guru, as by the need

of the disciple. That is the reason for the whole change in approach.

If you go to South America you find rheumatism, lumbago and such diseases. In the USA you find people who say, "I don't know what is happening to me. Can you do anything?" If you ask them exactly what is happening to them, they say they don't know. Now, the guru cannot teach the yoga sutras to people like this. Instead, he tells them about yoga nidra and antar mouna, so they can find out what is happening to them. So the yoga teacher becomes a yoga therapist.

A very learned scholar was commenting satirically on yoga's possibilities in the West and said, "Why so much talk about yoga; why not do some jogging instead?" This was directed at the tendency for yoga to become another kind of new health fad like running, swimming, playing football, etc.

Sometimes these intellectuals make off-hand remarks which have no scientific base or commonsense. Anyone can say, "What is the use of practising pranayama? Go and jog instead." Swami Vivekananda has also written in his books: "Go and play football." But while jogging has an effect on the physical body, yoga postures, as the scientists confirm, have a definite and intricate effect on the deeper physiological workings of the body, on the nervous system, electrical impulses, rate of oxygen consumption and cardiac function. When a person is jogging, his heart is being strained and a lot of pumping is going on. Oxygen consumption is maximum, while during yoga practice it is minimum. When all of these facts are taken into account, every intellectual with a scientific mind will understand that yoga cannot be compared with exercises like jogging.

Now that you have been to the Scandinavian countries and know something of the people and their mentality, do you think they are suited for this kind of yoga?

I think that the Scandinavian people have never really been deeply influenced by the religion they have been following

for centuries. All influences have been very external. Many people belong to a particular sect, but they don't know anything about it, and don't even care to know.

The Scandinavian countries have a much freer society than you can find anywhere in Europe. In a free society, you exhaust everything until there is nothing left. There is very fast elimination, and when the *vasanas* or the deep-rooted passions are normalized, they have no more exciting and stimulating value. Then one automatically becomes aware of the spiritual aspects of life.

This is very natural turning point. It happens to everyone. When the desires are completely fed, when the passions are exhausted and you want nothing more to enjoy, to see, to experience, what next? If you come to such a turning point in your life then the next stage is spiritual life. That is the reason why the Scandinavian people have been largely attracted to spirituality and yoga.

Could you perhaps comment on the spiritual progress that has been made here in Scandinavia?

In the Scandinavian countries, particularly in Denmark, practically every citizen knows something about yoga, even if he does not practise it. If you ask anyone's opinion about yoga, he might say, "Well, I don't practise, but I understand it is a good thing." I have also been informed that a certain government department issues a booklet on yoga every year to every adult citizen. This is a remarkable acknowledgement for any nation to make.

In Sweden and Norway there are very keen teachers who are working on yoga, not only from the educational point of view, but also from the research point of view. They are correlating their research with investigations made outside Scandinavia. Within a few years, I foresee the Scandinavian countries organizing and formulating yoga as a faculty, like any other faculty in the educational system.

As striving human beings we have a sense of ‘I’ and ego, which is very much the basis for most Western concepts, philosophies and religions. But in the East the general trend is towards selflessness, non-ego. How should the people of the West go about trying to eliminate their ego?

Ego is one aspect of human personality, and with this ego the Western mind has been able to create many things and give many substantial contributions to humanity at large. We cannot completely eliminate it, nor should we try, but there is one thing that can be done. The personal ego can be transformed through a concrete symbol. Once the ego is symbolized, then the spiritual transformation becomes automatic.

For most people in such a tense, competitive and aggressive culture as this, it is very difficult to cultivate selflessness. How does one cope with day-to-day life here? In the East it seems easier, because there is such a long tradition of sadhus, ascetics and monastic patronage.

I also had the same idea, but then I discovered it was not accurate. When I first travelled through the USA, Europe and Australia, I found people who were completely unique; they were so good, so humble, cordial and full of understanding. I was expecting confrontations, at least from the religious groups, the scientists and the doctors, but no. Some of them even thought I was like God, and I told them, “No, I am not like God; I am a human being. Please behave normally with me.”

Year after year I visit these countries and the Latin American countries where the people are very religious, and I find this same situation. Not only in their spiritual life, but in their daily life as well, in aeroplanes, railway stations and hotels, the people are much more cooperative and better behaved than in other parts of the world. I have lived in countries where it is very difficult to manage because the people are so arrogant in their religious and social beliefs. In one airport a man asked, “Do you believe in God?” When one swami answered, “No,” the man got angry and said, “You have no right not to. I am going to kill you.” Well, a person who believes in God may

be right, but that does not make one who does not believe wrong, because both are God's children.

Does the current popularity of spiritual movements signify that people are demanding the right to their own spiritual experiences?

During the last one hundred and fifty to two hundred years, in the materialistic society of the West, everything has become a matter of economics. The individual has become an integral part of a moving, industrialized society. Now, the time has come when each person is trying to assert his own individuality. Of course, the individual is an integral part of the society, whether it is an industrialized society, a military society or an underdeveloped society, and he has to move with it as well.

But side by side, there are certain elements in his nature that must be left to him completely. His spiritual life, for example, must be personal; society cannot decide about that, it can only provide the facilities. The government should never touch the spiritual aspirations of an individual as long as they are pure and genuine and free from any ulterior motive. When your spirituality has ulterior or political motives, the society or government has the right to step in. But as long as you are a keen aspirant, no king, emperor, government, society or social canon should interfere with you.

You are free to stand on your head, use a rosary or mala, wear a robe, go to church or practise meditation. You are free to change your name and become a swami. The purpose of spiritual freedom is so the aspirant should never feel that his spiritual destiny has been blocked by the society or the nation.

Spiritual freedom is something that has to be taken care of, and this is happening now. Many individuals, rightly or wrongly, have tried to assert that freedom and I see this as the silver lining on the horizon. The future holds the promise of every individual being free to choose his own spiritual path, rather than a powerful leader, government or society determining it for him.

It is observed that when people have the freedom to choose something which is obviously of benefit for them, and represents their next stage in development, by some law of inertia, or lower nature, they often do not choose it.

I think it is always better if an individual seeks and finds his own way for himself rather than someone else offering it to him. When man has completely fulfilled himself and reaches the climax of *bhoga*, or materialism, then there always comes a turning point. That is why you find that people who are very affluent go to the opposite extreme, wanting to experience abstinence and poverty. They reach a saturation point and they just don't know what to do with all their wealth anymore, so they try to escape and lead a different life. Everywhere I go, I find people who have arrived at this turning point, and are ready to become seekers. Particularly in India, we are very much concerned that every individual must become a seeker, and he should find his own way. For some time he will falter, but later on he will pick up.

Now there are so many movements around, it is difficult to avoid comparing them. I read about a Tibetan lama who said that he considered hatha yoga and tantra irresponsible, in that some yogis bring unqualified seekers in contact with strong methods too fast. Could you comment on that?

This is not absolutely correct, because in India the tantric techniques are given very properly and systematically, mostly to householders who practise them for years. The tantric tradition in India is mostly handled by householders who are married and can practise brahmacharya or maithuna as they like. They have both possibilities open to them, and in accepting either possibility, they do not in any way interfere with the norms of the society. The practices of tantra which are given to them are so graded by their family guru that it often takes them forty to fifty years to complete the sadhana.

When a seeker from the West comes all the way to India or Tibet, you cannot call him unqualified. He is a sincere seeker. It is up to the guru, who has to transform his consciousness,

to determine what method is most suitable for him. In tantra there are so many different methods. The guru may not give the practices done in the burial ground, using human skulls, wine or women. There are many other currents of tantra which are more easily adapted to the modern mind. I personally feel that tantra is a science which has to be made available to everybody.

Of course, when someone initiates unqualified people in the West or unqualified modern people in India, that can be said to be irresponsible. But it should be remembered that tantra is such a vast science that you cannot say that a person is unqualified for it. For instance, kriya yoga is a part of tantra, and according to the tantric tradition, kriya yoga can be handled by anyone, irrespective of qualification. It is said that even a person who is debauched (the worst disqualification in spiritual life) is qualified to practise tantra.

Where would it take him?

It will take him through the whole process of self-transformation

But isn't it necessary for an aspirant to purify his mind first before he practises tantra?

In tantra, hatha yoga has to be practised first. An aspirant is not taken straight into raja yoga or laya yoga. First hatha yoga has to be practised so that the physical elements are purified.

There is also the family tradition in India where a girl at the age of ten is taught how to make yantras and mandalas. When she attains puberty, around the age of thirteen, she immediately starts another practice. For one full month, she has to get up early in the morning, go to the river for a bath and then come and sit down for worship. This worship is very systematic. It is not just repetition of mantras; it involves water, flowers, colours, songs, bells, sounds. All of these elements influence the mind. So it is not entirely correct to say that tantric initiation can be given to unqualified people.

In most moments one seems to encounter hindrances on a personal level. After the first flight of enthusiasm, certain negative states of mind seem to set in, causing doubts, suspicion, disinterest and other reactions. Why do they occur?

This only happens when the leader of the movement poses as a superhuman being, and does not allow his disciples or followers to use their intellect or commonsense. If the leader does not force his personal views, religion or philosophy on his followers, then these problems do not arise. For example, I don't drink, but you can drink; I don't force you not to. I don't eat meat, but you can take it if you like. You see the point? You respect me because you love me and therefore you respect yourself. The basis of your love is the respect that you have. But you don't respect me because I am a superhuman being or God, or because I have special powers. That anachronistic approach always brings disasters to the followers.

Secondly, it is important that if you are someone's pupil, you can learn from others as well. Just as we try to monopolize a husband or a wife, many teachers try to monopolize disciples. Better to let them learn like bees, taking a little pollen from here, a little from there and then turning everything into honey. The knowledge has to be gained from as many sources as possible. Disciples and pupils should have complete freedom to enrich their learning so that the teacher can be proud of their knowledge, which has not been gained only from one person, but from every possible source. This is a tradition which has to be maintained, so that disastrous things do not happen.

In many spiritual institutions, questions of power and authority, especially over finances, become major problems. Do you encounter these problems and how do you manage them?

I have been very aware of these difficulties and what I have done is shift the institutional authority to a non-monastic body composed of outsiders, not swamis. Of course, they are my pupils, but they do not reside in the ashram. They decide the

institution policy and manage the organizing, money, banking and everything else. I just take care of my travels and my disciples, speak about yoga and give interviews such as this. I don't have to worry about how much money there is, what will happen, who is going to be the secretary and who is going to be the president.

In spiritual institutions there are two traditions, spiritual and temporal. Of course, there has to be the organizational side, but I am only concerned with the spiritual tradition – guru, disciple and yoga. These two traditions should never be confused with each other, otherwise there will be problems. I mostly remain outside Munger, and whatever happens in the ashram is not my responsibility. If people are starving, I don't care. They will not ask me. I don't feed them.

Do you think there is some benefit in a seeker exercising discrimination and trying to understand for himself what is what on the spiritual market?

No, there is no use at all. You see, the spiritual teachings are very simple. No matter what your guru has said, no matter how high, low or deep he is, if you are a sincere seeker, you can benefit by it. The thing is, benefit comes from within you, not from outside yourself. You have to find it inside yourself. The guru only says, "The fountain is within you." That is all he has to tell you. It is up to you to go deep into yourself. Intellect is a helper to some extent, but it becomes a barrier after a certain time, and we have to transcend it.

What is the barrier?

According to Patanjali, it comes up at the stage of savitarka samadhi. There is a dialogue in the mind all the time. It is very difficult to get away from it. There is awareness of the ideal, of concepts and of the different evaluations of ideals. We have to drop them at a certain point in samadhi. It is like leaving the dream state and entering into deep sleep.

Even simple things can stick to the mind and narrow it down, make it repeat itself.

It happens. Let it go that way. Mind is not a static substance. Brain is not static. It is subject to evolution. Evolution means change, progress and movement. When I was nine my brain was not the same as it is now that I am fifty-eight. Everything has changed. And therefore we should allow a person to change according to the laws of nature.



Notes

Notes

Notes



The satsangs of a realized master are a gift that inspires and blesses all who receive his wisdom and grace. From the 1960s to the 1980s Swami Satyananda's extensive international touring yielded a wealth of spiritual teachings spanning a vast range of subjects. Renowned for their depth of insight, clarity and compassion, the eternal truths revealed in these satsangs are presented in this comprehensive set of volumes *Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati*, for the upliftment of seekers everywhere.

Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati: Volume II includes short talks and press interviews given by Swami Satyananda from 1979–81 at yoga conventions, seminars and courses held internationally and at Bihar School of Yoga, India. A vast range of topics on multiple aspects of yoga and spiritual life are covered, providing practical solutions, clear explanations and inspiration. Swami Satyananda's talks are infused with a deep understanding of the needs of people from all walks of life.



[bar code here]

ISBN : 978-81-85787-03-9